



City of  
**Peterborough**

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**TO: Members of the Joint Services Steering Committee**

**FROM: Ken Doherty, Director of Community Services**

**MEETING DATE: May 14, 2009**

**SUBJECT: Report CSSSJSSC09-009  
Hostel and Housing Programs for Women at Cameron House**

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## **PURPOSE**

A report to inform the Joint Services Steering Committee on the status of hostel services for low-income single women and to seek authorization for staff to finalize an agreement with Brock Mission to redevelop Cameron House at 738 Chemong Road, in order to stabilize the operation of the current hostel and add permanent rental housing for women.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS**

That the Joint Services Committee endorse the recommendations outlined in Report CSSSJSSC09-009, dated May 14, 2009, of the Director of Community Services, as follows:

- a) That a by-law be passed authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to enter into a service contract with Brock Mission for the operation of Cameron House Semi-Independent Living Program from June 1, 2009 to December 31, 2011 for \$50,000 in 2009 and \$74,000 annually in 2010 and 2011, funded by the 100% provincial government Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program (CHPP);
- b) That a by-law be passed authorizing the Mayor and City Clerk to enter into a service contract with Brock Mission for the operation of a 10-bed hostel for single women over 24 years of age, to be funded under the Ontario Works Hostel

program from June 1, 2009 to December 31, 2012 at the current municipal rate as set through the municipal budget process;

- c) That staff continue the review of priority needs related to homelessness and bring forward a future report to recommend an allocation of the remaining Provincial Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program allocation, \$95,535 in 2009, and \$71,353 in 2010 and 2011.

## **BUDGET AND FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

The Cameron House hostel program would be operated within the 2009 hostel budget allocation, which is cost shared with the province at the 80/20% rate plus an additional municipal contribution of \$6.45 per day. The Semi-independent Living Program would be operated using \$75,000 per year of the 100% provincial funds under the CHPP. By co-locating these two programs, the overall operation becomes more viable. The City would then be able to withdraw the interim municipal payments of up to \$7,000 per month and at the same time stabilize the women's shelter program and create a more appropriate housing continuum for women.

## **BACKGROUND**

The City of Peterborough is the service manager for homelessness and housing programs and has an interest in ensuring an appropriate continuum of community-based services to effectively support individuals from homelessness to housing.

Following a review of community priorities and service needs with respect to an emergency hostel program, a Request for Proposal (RFP) # P-27-20 for hostel services was issued. As a result, Brock Mission was awarded the service contract for emergency hostel services to men (40 Beds). The Youth Emergency Shelter was awarded the service contract for hostel services to families (15 beds) and continued to provide hostel services for men and women under the age of 24 (15 beds).

However, no provider came forward to meet the needs of low-income single women over twenty-four years of age. Brock Mission agreed to continue to provide that service on an interim basis at Cameron House. The City agreed to provide Brock Mission with per diem funding. The City further agreed that when monthly operational costs exceeded revenue raised through per diem payments, donations and fund raising, the City would provide Brock Mission with up to \$7,000 per month in additional Basic Facility Support.

Cameron House has operated under this agreement for over a year. Over that period of time, the number of women requiring this emergency shelter service has fluctuated greatly. At times, the monthly average occupancy has been as low as 4, and at other

times, as high as 12, with most months averaging 8 to 10 women.

A stand-alone hostel for fewer than 15 women is not economically viable. The fluctuation of the number and the high needs of this population make program and budget planning a challenge. Staff continued to have discussions with other community service providers and there has been no one willing to operate a hostel service for this population because of these challenges. However, there is clearly still a need for emergency shelter for some women over the age of 24.

There is also a need to address the underlying issues that contribute to some women returning to the shelter on a frequent basis due to chronic difficulties with maintaining housing in the community.

## **CAMERON HOUSE REDEVELOPMENT PROPOSAL**

### **OPERATION OF PROPOSED PROGRAMS & SERVICES**

Brock Mission has indicated they are interested in redeveloping Cameron House to provide two programs at the same site. The first program would be the currently operating emergency bed program and will provide hostel services for up to 10 women. In addition to the emergency basic needs of food, shelter, and clothing, staff support would continue to be available to these women, including 4Cast counselling for substance abuse and VON.

The second program is proposed to provide semi-independent, rental housing. Women would rent bed-sitting rooms with some shared facilities, and would be able to access services and supports from staff, including those services already available to the hostel residents. This would assist women who have experienced chronic homelessness to move past the crisis of where to sleep every night, and move forward to a more stable medium-term housing arrangement and, with this intensive support, to eventually achieve and sustain permanent rent-geared-to income-housing.

These women are considered high risk, in that they were dealing with many issues (substance abuse, mental health issues, history as victims of violence, etc.) that affected their ability to retain housing. The Support Worker attached to the Semi-Independent Living Program would be responsible for the case management of all individuals residing in the semi-independent living rental units. In addition, this worker will assist some women who are able to transition from the emergency shelter into the community, but require some individualized support to make that transition successful. The Support Worker will also provide aftercare support for clients who move into housing after involvement in the Semi-Independent Living Program, to assist in retaining their housing and to avoid returning to shelter.

Please refer to Appendix C, the CHPP Service Plan, for a detailed description of the proposed program and outcomes to be achieved.

## **TRANSITION PLAN**

Initially, bed-sitting units would be developed through converting two bedrooms on the top floor of the current building. The supported semi-independent living program would provide supports to the women renting these bed-sitting rooms.

Cameron house is one of the priority proposals for new affordable rental housing put forward by the City of Peterborough to be considered for capital funding under the Canada-Ontario affordable housing program (Report PLHD09-003 “Ready-to-go” Affordable Housing Projects). Should this proposal be successful, the property would undergo a more significant renovation and expansion that would ultimately result in 8 independent living units. During the renovation, the shelter and semi-independent living programs would be temporarily re-located to an alternative site obtained in cooperation with Peterborough Housing Corporation (PHC). Some women will continue to receive the supports of the housing support program while they are residing in other permanent housing, in either Peterborough Housing Corporation stock or other suitable housing in the community. It is clear from the experience of women who return to Cameron House after unsuccessful attempts to live on their own, that more support could help break the cycle of homelessness. Providing complementary hostel and a semi-independent living arrangement is a model that has proven successful in other jurisdictions, especially with “hard-to-serve” hostel populations. Hostel users become stabilized for longer periods, learn independent living skills and are less frequent users of the hostel system.

## **PROPERTY MANAGEMENT OF CAMERON HOUSE**

At present, property management responsibilities fall to the staff of Cameron House and because of the nature of current services (providing temporary shelter), there are no landlord/tenant agreements or obligations and the staff on site ensures the physical property is maintained.

The proposal contained within this document speaks to residents renting individual units, having the benefit of support services along with shelter accommodation, all under the same roof. It will be necessary to have lease agreements, rules and regulations and all of the elements that are contained within a conventional landlord/tenant agreement for these rental units. The enforcement of such a relationship could cause a conflict for the staff of Cameron House who will also be responsible for providing supports to the same residents.

Peterborough Housing Corporation has agreed, in principle, to provide property management services for Cameron House, including rent collection and preventative and planned maintenance. Should a tenancy fail or become troubled, Cameron House staff would provide supports to the tenant and advocate to the “landlord”. This model allows separation of roles and responsibilities resulting in successful tenancies. It also affords the individual, as a PHC tenant, to apply for other PHC properties as an internal transfer when his or her situation is stabilized. Staff believes that this combination of benefits will strengthen the opportunities for long-term success, will allow turnover for

new tenants and will mitigate the need for ongoing intense supports from Cameron House staff so they can concentrate on the work of supporting vulnerable women.

### **PLANNING FOR THE REMAINING AVAILABLE CHPP FUNDS**

The City of Peterborough has historically used some of the CHPP funds to offset the 100% municipal component of the hostel per diem rate. No portion of the CHPP allocations was used to offset the municipal 20% share of the established hostel per diem rate. Over the last 4 years, funds were also used to support warming room and cooling space projects, emergency energy funds, rapid housing response projects and transitional hostel needs. In 2008, the Ministry clarified that topping up the hostel per diem rates was not an endorsed use of CHPP funding. A commitment was made by the City of Peterborough to ensure compliance with CHPP funding guidelines in 2009.

A number of community plans related to homelessness have been completed over the last several years. The next update to the community plans is anticipated in 2010-2011 under the Homelessness Partnership Strategies federal fund. Until the full review in 2010, it is proposed that the remainder of the CHPP funds be allocated based on the priorities established by these earlier plans. The key priorities outlined in the April 2007 update included:

1. Housing Retention/Homelessness Prevention
2. Outreach, Support and Aftercare Services
3. Transitional Housing
4. Public Awareness and Community Support
5. Community Capacity (improved coordination and collaboration in service delivery)

Consultation will be undertaken with key stakeholders to consider the priorities as set out in all previous plans including the most recent update in April 2007, and consideration will also be given to what services and supports now exist in the community in making recommendations for the remaining CHPP dollars.

Evaluation frameworks will be established with any of the programs funded through CHPP and reports on the findings are expected by the end of 2010. This information will also assist the next update to the Community Plan and the next cycle of service planning.

### **CONCLUSION**

The redevelopment proposal for Cameron House appears to be consistent with the goals of the provincial Consolidated Homelessness Prevention Program. These goals are to support those experiencing homelessness to obtain and keep longer term housing by connecting them with a system of community services that address

individual needs and personal supports. An additional goal of the CHPP is improving the service delivery system to encourage innovation.

The Brock Mission proposal to redevelop Cameron House as described will allow the community to retain Cameron House on behalf of homeless low-income women and to increase the continuum of housing available to assist this vulnerable population.

Using a portion of CHPP funds at this time allows the development of the semi-independent living program to commence in June and continue through to support women occupying the new rental units. Further review and consultation will be undertaken by staff to consider the most effective use of the remainder of the CHPP dollars in the context of the identified key priorities and community needs.

Submitted by,

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Attachment:  
Appendix A: Sample By- Law and Service Contract Semi-Independent Living Program  
Appendix B: Sample By-Law and Service Contract Emergency Hostel Services  
Appendix C: CHPP Service plan including Brock Missions' Cameron House  
Redevelopment Proposal