

To: Corporate and Finance Services Committee

From: Stephanie Sinnott, Commissioner,  
Corporate and Finance Services Department

Report Number: CF-24-28

Date of Report: April 3, 2024

Date of Meeting: April 8, 2024

Subject: Update on Actions to Address Poverty in 2023

Ward: All Wards

File: 03-05

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## **1.0 Purpose**

The purpose of this report is to respond to the following direction of the City Council through report CS-20-24 from its meeting of April 27, 2020:

“That staff report to City Council, through the Chief Administrative Officer, annually on actions and investments planned to be taken and that have been undertaken to address poverty in our community.”

Attachment 1 is the full list of City actions taken to address poverty in 2023.

Since the 2020 Council direction, the Innovation and Transformation Branch reporting relationship has been modified to report through the Commissioner, Corporate and Finance Services.

## **2.0 Recommendation**

That the Corporate and Finance Services Committee recommend to City Council:

That in accordance with Report CF-24-28 dated April 3, 2024 concerning an update on actions to address poverty in 2023, all future reporting on various initiatives taken to address poverty be included in reporting of the Oshawa Strategic Plan.

## **3.0 Executive Summary**

Not applicable.

## **4.0 Input From Other Sources**

The following have provided input to this report:

- Chief Administrative Officer
- Commissioner, Economic and Development Services
- Commissioner, Community and Operations Services
- Commissioner, Safety and Facilities Services
- Oshawa Seniors Community Centres 55+ (OSCC55+)

## **5.0 Analysis**

### **5.1 Actions Undertaken to Address Poverty by the City of Oshawa in 2023**

During 2023, both City Council and staff across all departments took several actions related to addressing poverty in the community. These specific actions are outlined in Attachment 1.

### **5.2 Actions Undertaken to Address Poverty by the Oshawa Seniors Community Centres 55+**

In addition to the actions outlined in Attachment 1, the following actions aimed at addressing poverty in the Oshawa community were taken by the OSCC55+ in 2023:

- Continued to provide free online activities such as meditation, yoga, music entertainment and seminars to address seniors' issues, as well as provide online programs for a nominal fee;
- Provided free monthly music genre entertainment at no cost to all seniors in the community;
- Continued to provide tablets to older adults free of charge and staff/volunteers provided free tutoring on the use of technology; and,
- OSCC55+ is a registered organization who provided free income tax clinics - 13 clinics were provided in 2023, serving 115 seniors.

## **6.0 Financial Implications**

There are no financial implications resulting from the recommendations in this Report.

## 7.0 Relationship to the Oshawa Strategic Plan

This report addresses the Oshawa Strategic goal of Social Equity.

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Julie Maclsaac, Director,  
Innovation and Transformation

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Stephanie Sinnott, Commissioner,  
Corporate and Finance Services Department

### City of Oshawa Actions and Investments to Address Poverty in 2023

Action	Description	Cost or Investment
1. Provision of safe needle disposal units	The City in collaboration with John Howard Society of Durham Region, provides and installs safe needle disposal units in priority City parks and greenspaces. There are currently 14 needle units in place.	\$2,000 for the replacement of unit liners.
2. Support for community gardens	<p>Through the City's Community Garden Program the City provides in-kind support to the Council approved community garden sites:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Harmony Community Garden at Delpark Homes Centre</li> <li>• The Field Community Garden at Airport South Field</li> <li>• Glen Street Community Garden at Cordova Park</li> <li>• Mary Street Community Garden at North Oshawa Park</li> </ul>	No additional cost.
3. Proclamations in 2023	<p>The proclamations in 2023 that related to residents living in poverty included:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• National 211 Day</li> <li>• Hunger Action Month – September 2023</li> </ul>	No cost.
4. Participation in Feed the Need Durham's Push for Hunger event	Members of City Council and City staff participated in this event raising awareness & funds for Feed the Need Durham.	No cost.
5. Expansion of Active Transportation network	<p>Specific expansion projects in 2023 included the inclusion of 2.0 km of off-road multi-use trails at the following locations:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Active Transportation Master Plan (A.T.M.P.) Link 4 (Brittania Avenue West to Windfields Farm Drive West)</li> <li>2. A.T.M.P. Link 2 (Harmony Creek Trail Extension from Coldstream Drive to Greenhill Avenue)</li> </ol>	Investment included as part of multi-year Capital Budgets.

Action	Description	Cost or Investment
<p>6. Parks Development in Priority Neighbourhoods</p>	<p>Construction was completed in 2023 on the following parks in priority neighbourhoods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Gold Point Wildlife Reserve – in the Lakeview neighbourhood</li> <li>• Cordova Valley Park – in the Lakeview neighbourhood</li> <li>• Ed Broadbent Waterfront Park – in the Lakeview neighbourhood</li> </ul> <p>Construction began in 2023 on the following parks in priority neighbourhoods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sunnyside Park – in Downtown Oshawa neighbourhood</li> </ul> <p>Design started/ongoing in 2023 on the following parks in priority neighbourhoods:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Rotary Park – in Downtown Oshawa neighbourhood</li> <li>• Conant Park – in Lakeview neighbourhood</li> <li>• Downtown Urban Square – in the Downtown Oshawa neighbourhood</li> </ul>	<p>Investment included as part of multi-year Capital Budgets or separate reports.</p>
<p>7. Provision of Grant Funding to organizations serving vulnerable populations</p>	<p>The City provided \$100,175 to various organizations serving diverse and vulnerable populations through the Strong Inclusive Communities Granting Stream</p>	<p>\$100,175 in 2023.</p>

Action	Description	Cost or Investment
8. Programs under the Property Tax Rebates, Reductions and Refunds Policy	<p>Property Tax Rebates and Reductions including the following are aimed at low-income residents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Tax Relief for Low Income Seniors</li> <li>• Tax Relief for Low Income Persons with Disabilities</li> </ul> <p>Property Tax Deferral for Low Income Seniors/Low Income Persons with Disabilities</p>	A total of 343 tax rebates were issued in 2023, representing a total value of \$183,505,015
9. Property Tax Arrears Payment Program	Property tax accounts with arrears now have a NEW monthly payment plan aimed to bridge tax accounts with two years of arrears into the current year status. This program is aimed to prevent outstanding accounts from reaching the Tax Sale Registration stage.	A total of 7 outstanding tax accounts used this program to bring their account to current during 2023.
10. Participation in the Region of Durham's Funders Table	The City of Oshawa has staff representation on this table, led by the Region of Durham. The purpose of this table is for municipalities, the United Way Durham Region and the Durham Community Foundations to share information, data and funding allocations in an effort to ensure the funds made available to the community reach as many as possible.	Staff time. No additional cost.
11. Provision of subsidy programs for Recreation Programs specifically designed for those living with low income or poverty	<p>In 2023, Recreation Services issued a total of 1,302 individual subsidies through the following subsidy programs:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Recreation Fee Assistance Program (100% City funded)</li> <li>• Recreation Program Cards (shared funding between Region of Durham and City of Oshawa)</li> <li>• Durham Region Childcare Subsidy (third party funded)</li> <li>• Jumpstart (third party funded)</li> </ul>	In 2023, the value of City funding was \$63,489.51, with an additional \$58,743.52 in external funding.

Action	Description	Cost or Investment
12. Support for Habitat for Humanity	Following City Council's direction to sell these lands in 2015, Economic and Development Services staff have continued to work with and assist Habitat for Humanity and Durham Region Non-Profit Housing Corporation (D.R.N.P.H.C.) to advance in a timely fashion the proposed development of the former City-owned lands located at 485 and 501 Normandy Street for the development for 50 stacked townhouse units. Habitat for Humanity and D.R.N.P.H.C. is exempt from Development Charges and Parkland Dedication charges as non-profit organizations. Building permits have been issued for all four buildings (50 residential units combined). These two D.R.N.P.H.C. buildings are complete and occupied. The two Habitat for Humanity buildings are currently under construction.	The value of the DC exemption is approximately \$633,232. The value of the exemption from Parkland Dedication charges is approximately \$58,900.
13. Support for The Refuge Youth Outreach Centre	City Council approved a zoning by-law amendment to permit the conversion of the former Holy Cross Elementary School to a residential mixed-use building containing 27 apartment units and a youth outreach centre through DS-21-211. Subsequent to the rezoning, an application for Site Plan Approval was approved by staff and an appropriate site plan agreement executed. Building permits have now been issued and the project is currently in the construction/inspection phase, moving toward completion.	No cost.
14. Support for Affordable Housing	Under City Council's delegated authority to staff, the site plan was approved for a 10 unit apartment building at 750 King St E. Building permits were issued and construction is complete. The owner is providing two barrier free, one bedroom units at an affordable rent rate supported by the Region. Four of the remaining 8 units will also be affordable.	No cost.

Action	Description	Cost or Investment
15. Support for Sedna Women's Shelter and Support Services Inc.	Under City Council's delegated authority to staff, the site plan was approved for 1356 Simcoe Street South. Building permits have been issued to construct a women's shelter/ personal support building with offices. The operator will be providing 1 barrier-free one bed unit, 3 one bed units, 8 two bed units, 3 three bed units and 1 four bed unit.	The value of the DC exemption is approximately \$323,788. The value of the exemption from Parkland Dedication charges is approximately \$24,800.
16. Support for Durham Region Non-Profit Housing Corp	<p>Under City Council's delegate authority to staff, the site plan was approved for 1060 Simcoe Street South. The purpose of the application is for an intensification of the number of affordable rental units on the existing property, with the intention of providing necessary housing for seniors and persons with disabilities.</p> <p>The following is a summary of the proposed development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The demolition of four (4) Townhouse Blocks consisting of twenty (20) units, to allow for the new construction;</li> <li>• The retention of five (5) Townhouse Blocks consisting of twenty-three (23) units;</li> <li>• The construction of a new three-storey Apartment Building with fifty-three (53) rental suites;</li> <li>• plus one (1) superintendent unit, for a total of fifty-four (54) units.</li> </ul> <p>Based on the above, the overall the number of affordable rental suites will increase from forty-three (43) units to seventy-six (76) units with a mix of senior citizens, persons with disabilities, and family housing.</p>	The value of the DC exemption is approximately \$751,307. The value of the exemption from Parkland Dedication charges is approximately \$83,700.



Action	Description	Cost or Investment
17. Incentives to Advance Affordable Housing	The City is a participant in the Investment in Affordable Housing (I.A.H.) Program.	Seven properties have received a reduced tax rate under the I.A.H. Program, for a total of 209 units. The total value of City levies saved in 2023 under the I.A.H. Program is approximately \$218,000.
18. Support for Riverbank Homes Ltd./IPM Affordable Housing Project	Under City Council's delegated authority to staff, Planning Services are working with the applicant to advance an application for site plan approval at 109 Colborne Street West for a six storey affordable housing apartment building with 79 residential units and surface parking. Conditional site plan approval is anticipated to be issued at the end of April 2024.	The value of the DC exemption is estimated at this time to be \$1,285,322. The value of the exemption from Parkland Dedication charges is estimated at this time to be \$122,450.
19. Support the Region of Durham with respect to advancing the redevelopment of certain existing Community Housing Sites	Following City Council approval of ED-23-178, Planning Services is working with the Region of Durham and Infrastructure Ontario on their plans to redevelop the existing properties owned by the Durham Regional Local Housing Corporation on Malaga Road and on Christine Crescent and Nevis Avenue to create more affordable and market housing units.	No cost at this time.
20. Free Menstrual Products in Recreation Facilities	Launched in March 2023, free menstrual products (both pads and tampons) are available for the public at Recreation Facilities.	Total product cost in 2023 was \$6,379.20