To: **Members of City Council**

From: **Mayor's Community and Social Well-Being Task Force**

Re: **Mayor's Task Force 2022-2026 End of Term Update**

AIM

To provide Council with an end-of-term update on the activities, achievements, and funding allocations of the Mayor's Community and Social Well-Being Task Force for the 2022-2026 term of Council.

BACKGROUND

At the March 16, 2023 meeting, Woodstock City Council established the Mayor's Community and Social Well-Being Task Force and created the Community Social Well-Being Reserve with an annual allocation of $150,000, funded from the OLG Slot Reserve Fund. The Task Force was established to accelerate solutions to address issues affecting the community's social well-being, with particular attention to supporting vulnerable and marginalized populations. Council directed that community agencies and organizations be invited to submit proposals for new or expanded initiatives and that the Task Force review proposals and provide funding recommendations to Council. Council further directed that priority for 2023 funding be given to agency services that would lead and support a coordinated encampment response program.

The Task Force was intentionally established with a flexible mandate, recognizing that community needs evolve over time and that effective solutions require collaboration among municipal departments, community agencies, and other stakeholders. Throughout this term of Council, the Task Force has focused on three key priority areas:

- Encampment Response
- Youth Services
- Food Insecurity

The Task Force has served as a forum to identify emerging needs, foster collaboration among community partners, and recommend strategic investments from the Community Social Well-Being Reserve to support innovative and impactful initiatives.

COMMENTS

Encampment Response and Homelessness

Addressing encampments was the Task Force's initial priority, and one of its first actions was to establish a City-led Encampment Response Core Team. This partnership brings together representatives from the City Parks Department, Bylaw Enforcement, Public Works, Communications, Fire Department, Woodstock Police Service, Oxford County Human Services, Operation Sharing, SWPH, OCCHC, UTRCA, and other community partners to

proactively monitor and respond to encampments throughout the City. The Core Team meets regularly and provides regular updates to the Task Force.

Since its establishment, the Core Team has significantly enhanced coordination among service providers and municipal partners, resulting in measurable outcomes. Through a combination of outreach, case management, enforcement, and environmental remediation, the team has worked to:

- Create an Encampment Field Assessment Tool to prioritize risk and enable resources to be deployed more strategically;
- Connect individuals experiencing homelessness to housing, health, and social supports;
- Improve the safety of individuals residing in encampments and surrounding neighbourhoods;
- Reduce the number and duration of encampments on public property;
- Increase voluntary compliance and reduce the need for enforcement interventions;
- Coordinate responses across agencies and departments; and
- Restore public spaces following encampment closures.

Council's approval of an internal Parks Encampment Team represents another significant milestone. The dedicated team assists with field assessments, waste management, site restoration, and rapid response activities. Their work has improved service levels, reduced remediation costs, and shortened response times following encampment closures.

As the Core Team matured and became operationally established, the Task Force has continued to receive regular updates while broadening its focus to other social well-being priorities facing the community.

Youth Services

As discussions evolved, the Task Force recognized the importance of investing in upstream prevention initiatives and supporting positive outcomes for youth. Community consultations and presentations highlighted concerns related to social connection, belonging, access to opportunities, transportation barriers, and school engagement.

In response, the Task Force supported initiatives designed to provide safe and supervised recreational opportunities, increase youth engagement, foster community connections, and support leadership development. Funding was also provided for initiatives such as Planet Youth Oxford that focus on data-driven prevention strategies and community-based approaches to reducing youth substance use and enhancing long-term well-being. These investments reflect the Task Force's belief that early intervention and positive youth development are critical components of a healthy and resilient community.

Food Insecurity

The increasing cost of living and growing demand on community support agencies prompted the Task Force to expand its focus to food insecurity. Task Force discussions recognized that many residents were experiencing increased financial pressures and that local organizations were facing growing demand for food assistance.

The Task Force supported initiatives that improved access to food, enhanced local food distribution networks, and strengthened community capacity to respond to food insecurity. Support for collaborative approaches such as food rescue and food redistribution initiatives helped build local partnerships and leverage existing community resources to maximize impact.

Funding Summary

Over the 2022-2026 term of Council, a total of $548,500 was allocated through the Community Social Well-Being Reserve in support of projects and initiatives aligned with the Task Force priorities.

The distribution of funding by priority area was as follows:

Priority Area	Funding Approved	Percentage of Total Funding
Encampment Response	$284,000	52%
Youth Initiatives	$141,400	26%
Food Insecurity	$123,100	22%
Total	$548,500 (possible $600,000)	

The largest investment category was encampment response, reflecting the original priority established by Council and the significant resources required to support coordinated outreach, site remediation, and response coordination. As the term progressed and encampment response activities became more established, funding recommendations increasingly supported prevention-focused initiatives for youth and community-based responses to food insecurity.

A detailed summary of all funding allocations approved during this term, including recipient organizations, project descriptions, and funding amounts, is attached as Appendix "A".

Conclusion

The Mayor's Community and Social Well-Being Task Force has provided a flexible and collaborative mechanism for responding to emerging social challenges throughout this term of Council. Through strategic investments and strong partnerships with community organizations, social service providers, and municipal departments, the Task Force has helped advance initiatives to address encampments, support positive outcomes for youth, and respond to growing food insecurity in the community.

The establishment of the Encampment Response Core Team represents a particularly significant achievement, creating a coordinated model for addressing encampments through collaboration, outreach, enforcement, and support services. As operational responsibility for encampment response has matured, the Task Force has successfully broadened its focus to address other key determinants of community well-being.

The work undertaken during this term has demonstrated the value of collaborative community partnerships and targeted investments in accelerating solutions for some of Woodstock's most vulnerable residents.

ATTACHMENTS

Summary of Community Social Well-Being Reserve Funding Allocations (2023-2026)

RECOMMENDATION

That Woodstock City Council receive the report regarding Mayor's Task Force 2022-2026 End of Term Update as information.

Authored by: Amy Humphries, B. Math, M.P.A., Deputy Chief Administrative Officer

Approved by: Jerry Acchione, Mayor