Minutes – Standing Policy Committee on Community Services – February 3, 2026

REPORTS

Item No. 4 Winnipeg Hoarding and Collecting Behaviours Taskforce

STANDING COMMITTEE DECISION:

The Standing Policy Committee on Community Services concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service, as amended, and approved the following:

1. That the semi-annual update be received as information.

2. That the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to report back to the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services on an annual basis, commencing in February 2027.

DECISION MAKING HISTORY:

Moved by Councillor Allard,

That the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service be concurred in, with the following amendment:

- Add the following new Recommendation:

  "2. That the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to report back to the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services on an annual basis, commencing in February 2027."

Carried

STANDING COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On December 2, 2025, the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services concurred in the recommendation of the Winnipeg Public Service and granted an extension of time of 60 days to report back on the following:

1. The Winnipeg Hoarding and Collecting Behaviours Taskforce, including:

   A. The number of referrals and where they were referred to.

   B. In-kind costs incurred by the City.

On May 5, 2023, the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services directed the Winnipeg Public Service to provide a written report on a semi-annual basis to the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services, commencing in November 2023 regarding the Winnipeg Hoarding and Collecting Behaviours Taskforce, including:

1. The number of referrals and where they were referred to.

2. In-kind costs incurred by the City.

STANDING COMMITTEE DECISION:

On June 29, 2022, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks approved the following:

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

STANDING COMMITTEE DECISION (continued):

1. That the report of the Winnipeg Public Service be received as information.

2. That the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to report back to the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks in 180 days with a verbal report containing an update on the matter.

On April 11, 2022, the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks concurred in the recommendation of the East Kildonan-Transcona Community Committee, as amended, and directed the Winnipeg Public Service to report back in 90 days on the following:

1. Establishing a taskforce on Hoarding and Collecting Behaviors in public and private spaces within Winnipeg led by the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service with the following action items to be considered:

    A. Set terms and references to guide the work of the taskforce;

    B. Identify and invite stakeholders, including those with lived experience, to ensure an inclusive approach.

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION:

On March 22, 2022, the East Kildonan-Transcona Community Committee passed the following motion:

WHEREAS it is difficult to address Hoarding and Collecting Behaviours without explicitly naming Hoarding Disorder,

AND WHEREAS this motion is wanting to specifically address Hoarding and Collecting Behaviours in the following areas:

- the acquisition of, and failure to discard, a large number of possessions that appear to be useless or of limited value;

- living spaces sufficiently cluttered so as to preclude activities for which those spaces were designed;

DECISION MAKING HISTORY (continued):

COMMUNITY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATION (continued):

- public spaces sufficiently cluttered so as to preclude activities for which those spaces were designed;

- significant distress or impairment in function caused by the hoarding;

AND WHEREAS Hoarding Disorder represents both a mental health concern and a public safety issue;

AND WHEREAS there is a definitive need to balance the rights and needs of a person exhibiting traits of a hoarding disorder and that of the public health and safety of the individual and others;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks be requested to direct the Winnipeg Public Service to report back in 90 days on the following:

1. Establishing a taskforce on Hoarding and Collecting Behaviors in public and private spaces within Winnipeg led by the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service with supports from Manitoba Shared Health with the following action items to be considered:

    A. Set terms and references to guide the work of the taskforce;

    B. Identify and invite stakeholders to ensure an inclusive approach.

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT

Title: Winnipeg Hoarding and Collecting Behaviours Taskforce Update – Semi-Annual Report (July – December 2025)

Critical Path: Standing Policy Committee on Community Services

AUTHORIZATION

Author	Department Head	CFO	CAO
L. Gilmour	C. Schmidt	N/A	J. Dunford

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service (WFPS) was directed to create a taskforce in April 2022. This taskforce is to address hoarding behaviours. The City formed a taskforce made up of government and community organizations. After a couple of meetings, the taskforce created a smaller group (triage group). The triage group is made up of direct service providers.

On May 5, 2023, the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services directed the Public Service to report back twice a year, starting in November 2023. The update includes:

1. The number of referrals the taskforce issued and to which agencies they sent them.
2. In-kind costs incurred by the City

In November 2023, Council agreed to an information sharing agreement to help the triage group refer people to the right services. This agreement was signed by all parties in November 2025.

WFPS is reaching out again to the residents now that the information sharing agreement is in place. The taskforce will meet to review and assign referrals in January 2026.

Hoarding and collecting behaviours are linked to complex mental health concerns. These concerns often need intensive and sustained mental health supports.

RECOMMENDATIONS

1. That the semi-annual update be received as information.

REASON FOR THE REPORT

On May 5, 2023, the Standing Policy Committee on Community Services directed the Winnipeg Public Service to provide a written report on a semi-annual basis, commencing in November 2023, regarding the Winnipeg Hoarding and Collecting Behaviors Taskforce including:

1. The number of referrals and where they were referred to.

2. In-kind costs incurred by the City

On December 2, 2025, an extension of 60 days was provided to report back on the matter.

IMPLICATIONS OF THE RECOMMENDATIONS

There are no implications associated with the report being received as information.

HISTORY/DISCUSSION

Context and Background

Prior to discussing the development of the taskforce, it is important to better define hoarding and collecting behaviours, and the context in which the taskforce exists.

As outlined by the American Psychiatric Association (APA), “People with hoarding disorder have persistent difficulty getting rid of or parting with possessions due to a perceived need to save the items. Attempts to part with possessions create considerable distress and lead to decisions to save them. The resulting clutter disrupts the ability to use living spaces”. However, the APA notes that hoarding is different from collecting behaviours where “collectors typically acquire possessions in an organized, intentional, and targeted fashion. Once acquired, the items are removed from normal usage.” Further the APA notes that the “acquisition of objects in people who hoard is largely impulsive, with little active planning… whereas those of collectors are narrowly focused on a particular topic.”

In terms of consequences the APA suggests that a “hoarding disorder can cause problems in relationships, social and work activities, and other important areas of functioning. Potential consequences of serious hoarding include health and safety concerns, such as fire hazards, tripping hazards, and health code violations. It can also lead to family strain and conflicts, isolation and loneliness… and an inability to perform daily tasks.”

Support for individuals who hoard typically involves intensive and sustained mental health supports. As identified by the APA “randomized controlled trials have established cognitive behavioral therapy (CBT) for hoarding disorder as an effective treatment” however it is important to note, and as acknowledged by the APA “despite the effectiveness of CBT for hoarding disorder, a substantial number of hoarding disorder cases remain clinically impaired by their hoarding symptoms after treatment.”

The above information is important context in understanding that hoarding is most often linked to complex mental health concerns that require significant and ongoing mental health supports. These supports do not exist currently within the Public Service. Further, as identified through the work of the taskforce and the triage group, needed services are also limited in community or have significant wait times.

On March 22, 2022, the East Kildonan-Transcona Community Committee recommended to the Standing Policy Committee on Protection, Community Services and Parks that the Winnipeg Public Service be directed to report back in 90 days on the formation of the following:

1. Establishing a taskforce on Hoarding and Collecting Behaviors in public and private spaces within Winnipeg, led by the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service with supports from Manitoba Shared Health with the following action items to be considered:

    A. Set terms and references to guide the work of the taskforce;

    B. Identify and invite stakeholders, including those with lived experience, to ensure an inclusive approach.

The stated purpose of the taskforce, as identified during the first meeting of the group was to collectively address hoarding and collecting behaviours in public and private spaces within the City of Winnipeg, including:

1.1 Enabling enhanced collaboration and communication between all stakeholders with related responsibility or expertise as facilitated by the Winnipeg Fire Paramedic (WFPS) Service.

1.2 Establishing a primary point of contact and channels of communication to ensure the appropriate agency is able to address reported issues.

1.3 Gathering input from involved parties, including those with lived experience to guide current and future planning.

The group included representation from:

- WFPS Emergency Paramedics in the Community (EPIC) Program
- Winnipeg Police Service
- Winnipeg Transit
- Winnipeg Animal Services
- Winnipeg Regional Health Authority (WRHA)
- OCD Center, Canadian Mental Health Association
- Age and Opportunity (A&O)
- Anxiety/Hoarding SME Mental Health Practitioner
- Shared Health
- Health Outreach Community Support (HOCS), WRHA
- End Homelessness Winnipeg

- Winnipeg Community Services, Community Development (Crisis Response)
- Main Street Project
- St. Boniface Street Links
- A community member with lived experience

WFPS, along with representatives from the Community Development Division's (CD) Community Crisis Team and external organizations, were able to identify the key issues and engage parties in constructive communication. This included the establishment of a "triage group" derived from the overall task force. An email (hoardinghelp@winnipeg.ca) was created to streamline the intake of reports of hoarding conditions. The email is currently managed by WFPS and is only shared internally to City of Winnipeg staff.

December 2025 Updates

In November 2023, WFPS sought Council permission to enter into an information sharing agreement with external partners to facilitate the sharing of hoarding referrals. Through discussions with external partners, modifications were required on the proposed agreement. Final signatures were received in November 2025 and the hoarding referral work has restarted.

In the 2023 update, Community Services provided direction that the Community Crisis workers would no longer be able to assist on the project due to other workload commitments. As a result, promotion of the hoarding referral service and interactions with referrals has been at minimum until new resources can be identified. There are still no resources available with the appropriate skillset to meet and work with referred individuals.

As the Hoarding Taskforce is now positioned to review referrals, there will be communication to all City staff regarding the process and contact points should they encounter a hoarding situation. This is being targeted for early 2026.

WFPS continues to track all email referrals received. Under the new information sharing agreement, when hoarding referrals are received, WFPS will contact the individual requesting their approval in the referral program and basic demographic information. The hoarding taskforce will then review the information and determine the most appropriate resource to assign. If the Fire Prevention or Emergency Paramedics in the Community (EPIC) teams attend and immediate health resources are requested, we will refer to 211 for assistance.

Community Risk Reduction continues to provide guidance to the community on the dangers of hoarding and provides one to two presentations a year to community groups. The external groups the City partners with, all work with clients that are living in homes. There are limited resources available to assist individuals with hoarding that are living unsheltered.

In cases where the debris in an encampment is becoming dangerous for fire safety, outreach service providers are asked to attend and assist with mindful clean ups.

Referrals

Assignment of Hoarding Case	2023	2024	2025
Community Crisis	9		
Declined Service	5		
Awaiting Assignment	5	9	4
Healthy Aging Resource Team (HART) Winnipeg Health Authority (WHRA)	2		
Other Situations	3		
Emergency Paramedics in the Community (EPIC)	1		
Health Outreach Community Support (HOCS)	1		
Canadian Mental Health Association (CMHA)	1		
Total Number of Cases	**27**	**9**	**4**

In Kind Costs to Date (April 18, 2023, to September 12, 2023)

In Kind Costs	2023	2024	2025
In-kind costs - WFPS	$948.50 (18.5 hours Community Risk Reduction Officer)	Temporary FTE – 20 hours	Temporary FTE – 20 hours
In-kind costs - CMS	~$13,000.00 (184.5 hours Community Crisis Workers)	0	0

In 2023, each referral took an average of 4.5 hours of staff time to address or $480 in kind costs per case.

In 2024 and 2025, the Public Service leveraged light duty staff to undertake this work. These staff members are paid as part of their rehabilitation process, and their involvement supports their progress to return to operations. There is no additional cost to the department in deploying them to this work.

As the hoarding taskforce begins reviewing and receiving referrals it is anticipated that WFPS in kind costs will increase as time is dedicated to referral follow ups.

Next Steps

Taskforce meetings are resuming in January 2026, and referrals will begin again to partner organizations.

The hoarding helps email will be advertised among City resources. If a referral comes in, WFPS will contact the individual for additional contact details and permission to refer to an external resource. Once permission is granted, the individual's contact details will be distributed to our external partners for follow-up.

To expand any services beyond basic referrals, appropriately trained staff resources would be required.

FINANCIAL IMPACT

Financial Impact Statement Date: Dec 22, 2025

Project Name:

Winnipeg Hoarding and Collecting Behaviours Taskforce Update – Semi-Annual Report (July – December 2025)

COMMENTS:

There are no financial implications arising from the recommendations in this report.

John Hall FCMA, CGMA
Financial Controller
Fire Paramedic Service

CONSULTATION

This Report has been prepared in consultation with: N/A

OURWINNIPEG POLICY ALIGNMENT

The work and initiatives of the hoarding taskforce identified in this report are applicable to the following aspects of the *OurWinnipeg 2045 Development Plan*:

Leadership and Good Governance
Policy 1.4 - Integrated Knowledge and Resources
Coordinate inter-departmental systems, projects and resources, making the best use of internal and external expertise to better understand service needs, find the most appropriate solutions, optimize resources, and maximize community outcomes.

Good Health and Wellbeing
Policy 4.2 - Evidence-Informed Health Action
Leverage strategic partnerships on community health and development activities that promote resource pooling, data collection, information sharing, and joint action.

Policy 4.3 - Proactive Health Intervention
Utilize social determinants of health to understand and achieve poverty reduction, crime prevention and harm reduction. Practice early intervention and engage in community partnerships that fully leverage wrap-around supports, recreation and resources, and enable opportunities for all, and especially for those who are systemically disadvantaged.

WINNIPEG CLIMATE ACTION PLAN ALIGNMENT

Consideration was given as to whether this report connects to the Winnipeg Climate Action Plan (CAP), and it was determined that the CAP is not applicable to this specific report.

WINNIPEG POVERTY REDUCTION STRATEGY ALIGNMENT

The work and initiatives of the hoarding taskforce identified in this report are applicable to the following aspects of the Winnipeg Poverty Reduction Strategy 2021 – 2031:

Goal 4: Community Well-Being Supports for those in Greatest Need are Increased
"Significant gaps in health, mental health, and well-being exist in Winnipeg." The proposed improved hoarding referral process will provide well-being supports for those in need due to hoarding conditions.

10-year Objectives:

B. Front-line City employees have the knowledge, skills and resources to help connect residents to needed supports.
C. Strategic partnerships to connect people to needed supports are developed.

SUBMITTED BY

Department: Winnipeg Fire Paramedic Service
Division: Executive
Prepared by: Lisa Gilmour, Assistant Chief Community Risk Reduction
Date: December 22, 2025