

**TO:** ACTING CITY MANAGER **DATE:** 2021 June 2

**FROM:** DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING **FILE:** 16000 20  
*Reference: Homelessness Response*

**SUBJECT: BC HOUSING'S EMERGENCY RESPONSE CENTRE TEMPORARY SHELTER – EXTENSION OF LICENSING AGREEMENT**

**PURPOSE:** To seek Council authorization to extend the City's licensing agreement with BC Housing for the continued operation of the Emergency Response Centre temporary shelter at 3860 Sperling Avenue.

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**RECOMMENDATIONS:**

1. **THAT** Council authorize staff to extend the City's licensing agreement with BC Housing to allow for the continued operation of the Emergency Response Centre temporary shelter on the parking lot at 3860 Sperling Avenue, and that the shelter remain in place for a term ending no later than 2021 December 31; and
2. **THAT** Council authorize staff to inform BC Housing of Council's decision.

**REPORT****1.0 BACKGROUND**

Addressing homelessness has been a Council priority since Council passed a motion in 2018 November authorizing staff to pursue work needed to improve the response to homelessness in Burnaby.

In response to COVID-19, BC Housing has worked with several local municipalities, including Burnaby, to open Emergency Response Centres (ERC). These centres operate much like a temporary shelter and provide a safe space for people experiencing homelessness to maintain safe distancing during the pandemic. The shelters provide accommodation 24 hours a day, seven days per week.

When the need for an emergency response centre was identified for Burnaby, City staff worked with BC Housing to offer the east parking lot at Burnaby Lake Sports Complex – 3860 Sperling Avenue - as a site for an ERC (see *Attachment #1*). To facilitate the ERC, the City established a licensing agreement with BC Housing to install modular trailers that provide 40 beds for homeless

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individuals. The ERC was established as an interim measure while work to develop additional supportive housing units at Norland Place (3986 Norland Avenue) was underway.

The license agreement term for the ERC is from 2020 October 28 to 2021 June 30. It has now been determined that the new supportive housing units at Norland Place will not be completed until 2021 fall. To provide for the continued operation of the ERC until the new Norland units are ready for occupancy, BC Housing has requested an extension of its license agreement for 3980 Sperling Avenue until 2021 December 31. The purpose of this report is to seek Council authorization to extend the term of the licensing agreement for 3860 Sperling Avenue.

## **2.0 POLICY CONTEXT**

The extension of the City's licensing agreement with BC Housing for the continued operation of the ERC aligns with the policy objectives of the City's Equity Policy (2020), Mayor's Task Force Community Housing Final Report (2019), the Corporate Strategic Plan (2017), the Social Sustainability Strategy (2011) and the Official Community Plan (1998).

## **3.0 OPERATION OF THE EMERGENCY RESPONSE CENTRE**

The City has licensed a portion of the parking lot at 3860 Sperling Avenue to BC Housing for a nominal fee for the construction and operation of the ERC. Under the terms of the license agreement, BC Housing was responsible for the construction and servicing of the modular units and is responsible for the ERC's ongoing operation costs. BC Housing, in turn, has established an operating agreement with Progressive Housing Society to operate the centre on its behalf. At the end of the agreement term, BC Housing is required to remove the modular units and return the used portion of the parking lot back to the City in its original condition.

The ERC is approximately 7,500 square feet in size and provides 40 individual rooms with shared washroom and shower facilities. Key features of BC Housing's operating agreement with Progressive Housing include:

- operation on a 24 hour a day, 7 day a week basis;
- client access to the facility by referral only;
- supervision provided by at least two staff at all times;
- provision of secure storage for personal belongings, including carts and bikes;
- pet friendly;
- provision of a meal program, housing outreach and other support services for occupants;
- overdose prevention monitoring similar to services provided at the Douglas shelter and the Norland Place supportive housing; and
- provision of health, mental health and substance use supports by Fraser Health.

Security inside the facility is provided by Progressive Housing. The City has provided additional security patrols of the immediate vicinity of the ERC.

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Since opening in 2021 January, the ERC has operated at capacity. Progressive Housing has been working closely with individuals at the centre to connect them to services and prepare them for a move to the new supportive housing units at the new Norland Place development.

#### **4.0 EXTENSION OF THE LICENSE AGREEMENT**

The original term of the City's license agreement with BC Housing was 2021 June 30. This timeline was to allow for a new 43-unit supportive housing development to be completed at Norland Place (3986 Norland Avenue) and for residents at the ERC to transition to the new units. While site preparation and servicing is underway at Norland Place, the overall construction schedule has been delayed. The new units are not expected to be ready for occupancy until late fall 2021. With limited housing options for homeless individuals<sup>1</sup>, BC Housing has requested an extension of its licensing agreement with the City for 3860 Sperling Avenue. An extension of the license agreement would allow for the continued operation of the ERC and would facilitate the transition of ERC residents to the new units at Norland Place.

At the time the license agreement was first established with BC Housing, it was anticipated that the ERC's end date of 2021 June 30 would align with the construction schedule for the new Burnaby Lake Aquatic and Arena facility when the parking lot at 3860 Sperling Avenue would be needed as a staging area for construction. Subsequent to the license agreement, the City acquired the former Fortius Centre at 3713 Kensington Avenue which has resulted in a design review for the Burnaby Lake Aquatic and Arena facility. As a result, the parking lot at 3860 Sperling Avenue will not be required until the first quarter of 2022.

Therefore, to facilitate the transition of homeless individuals at the ERC to new supportive housing units at 3986 Norland Place, it is proposed that the City extend its license agreement with BC Housing for the operation of the ERC until 2021 December 31.

#### **3.0 CONCLUSION**

The Emergency Response Centre temporary shelter at 3860 Sperling Avenue has provided a valuable service for homeless individuals during the COVID-19 pandemic. BC Housing has requested an extension of the licensing agreement for 3860 Sperling Avenue to allow for the completion of new supportive units at 3986 Norland Avenue. Once completed, ERC residents will transition to the new supportive housing units.

It is therefore recommended that Council authorize staff to extend the City's licensing agreement with BC Housing to allow for the continued operation of the Emergency Response Centre

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<sup>1</sup> At the beginning of the pandemic, capacity at the Douglas Road shelter was reduced from 40 beds to 25 beds to allow for physical distancing. The City's other facility for those experiencing homeless, the 52-unit Norland Place, has operated at capacity since it was opened in 2019 October.

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temporary shelter on the parking lot of 3860 Sperling Avenue, and that the shelter remain in place for a term ending no later than 2021 December 31 .

It is further recommended that Council authorize staff to inform BC Housing of Council's decision.



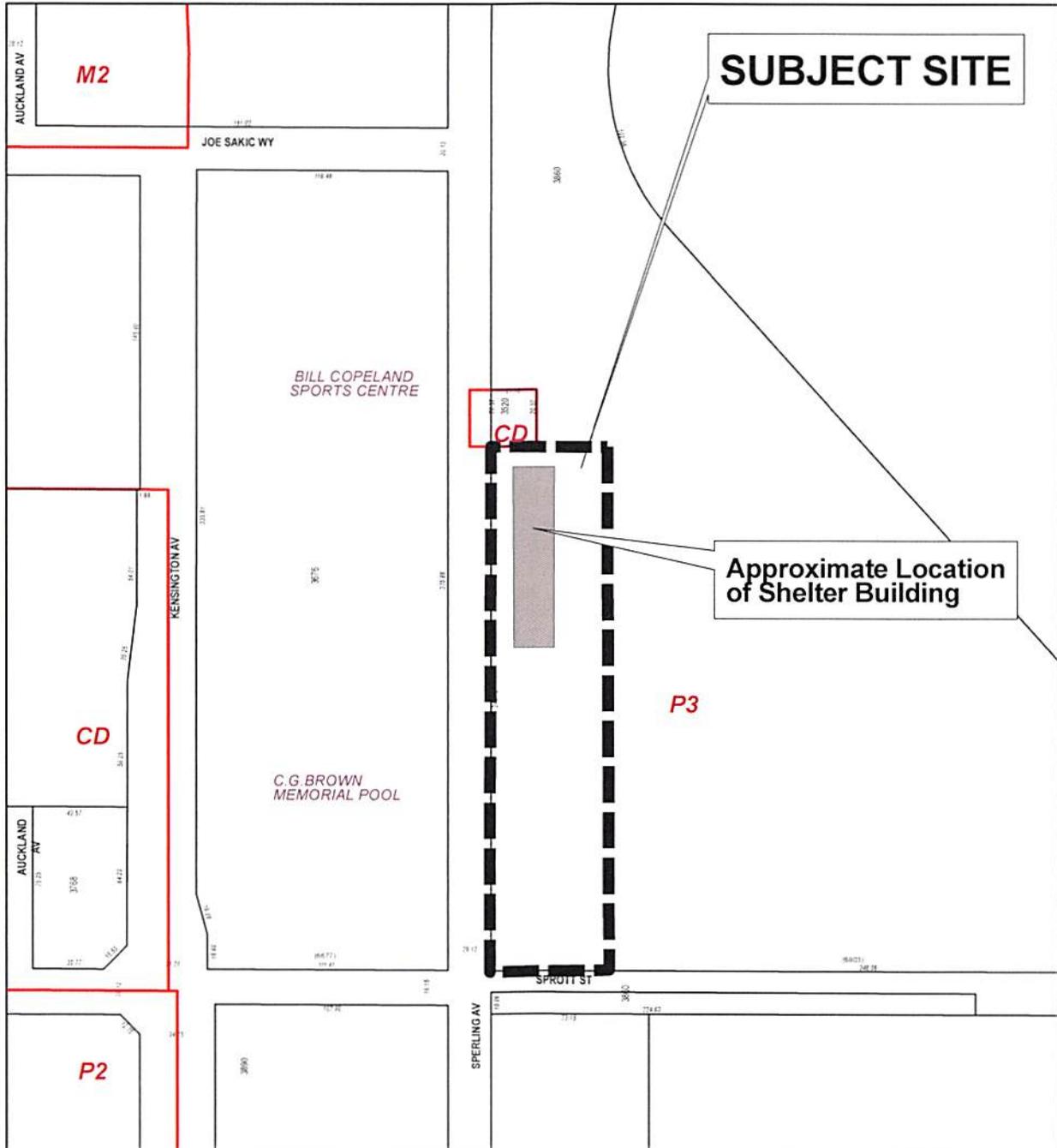
E.W. Kozak, Director  
PLANNING AND BUILDING

MM:sa

**Attachment**

Copied to:	Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services	OIC-RCMP
	Director Public Safety and Community Services	Fire Chief
	Director Corporate Services	City Clerk
	Director Finance	Chief Licence Inspector
	City Solicitor	

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PLANNING & BUILDING DEPARTMENT



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3860 SPERLING AVENUE

 Subject Site