

TO: CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER **DATE:** 2021 November 30

FROM: DIRECTOR PLANNING AND BUILDING **FILE:** 16000 20
DIRECTOR PUBLIC SAFETY AND *Reference:* Homelessness Response
COMMUNITY SERVICES

SUBJECT: HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE: WINTER 2021/2022

PURPOSE: To provide Council with information on the homelessness response for the 2021/2022 winter season.

RECOMMENDATIONS:

1. **THAT** Council receive this report for information purposes.
2. **THAT** a copy of this report be forwarded to the Social Planning Committee and the Public Safety Committee for information.

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.

Since that time, the City has worked with BC Housing to open a temporary shelter (Douglas Shelter, 2294 Douglas Road), a new supportive housing development (Norland Place, 3986 Norland Avenue) and an Emergency Response Centre (3860 Sperling Avenue). The City also opened warming centres in the winters of 2018-2019 and 2019-2020. In addition, in 2021 April, the City worked with community partners to successfully apply for UBCM Strengthening Communities funding (\$1,223,375) to implement homelessness actions to help prevent the spread of COVID-19.

At its Closed meeting held on 2021 November 22, Council approved the City's response to homelessness for the 2021/2022 winter season, authorizing staff to:

- work with BC Housing on a communications plan for the extension of the Douglas Shelter lease to 2025;
- extend the City's licensing agreement with BC Housing to allow for the continued operation of the Emergency Response Centre temporary shelter at 3860 Sperling Avenue until 2022 August 31;
- establish an emergency warming centre in cases of extreme weather events for the 2021/2022 winter season; and

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- advise BC Housing, Fraser Health Authority, Progressive Housing Society, and the Task Force to End Homelessness in Burnaby of the City's approach to homelessness services for the 2021/2022 winter season.

This report provides an update on available homelessness services in the community for the 2021/2022 winter season. It also provides information on additional services planned by the City.

2.0 POLICY CONTEXT

This report aligns with the following Council-adopted policies, plans, and strategies: *City's Equity Policy* (2020), *Mayor's Task Force on Community Housing* (2019), *Corporate Strategic Plan* (2017), and the *Social Sustainability Strategy* (2011).

3.0 EXISTING HOMELESS SERVICES – TEMPORARY SHELTERS AND CENTRES

The following existing services will be available this winter:

- Douglas Shelter – 2294 Douglas Road – 25 beds;
- Emergency Response Centre – 3680 Sperling Avenue – 40 beds;
- COVID-19 Isolation Centre – up to 34 beds in a local hotel for homeless individuals who need to isolate because of COVID-19; and
- Extreme Weather Shelters – Southside Community Church, 7135 Walker Avenue – 12 beds, from the 1st to the 15th of the month and Westminster Bible Chapel, 7540 6th Street – 10 beds, from the 16th to the end of month.

More information on each of these services is provided below.

3.1 Douglas Shelter, 2294 Douglas Road

The Douglas Shelter was opened in 2019 August. The shelter is operated in partnership with BC Housing and Progressive Housing Society. The City is responsible for lease costs of this privately owned site and building, BC Housing funds the operation of the shelter, and Progressive Housing operates the centre. The Douglas Shelter is open 24 hours a day, seven days a week. The original capacity of the shelter was 40 beds but due to the COVID-19 pandemic, capacity has been reduced to 25 beds to allow for more physical distancing.

The original lease term for the shelter was for three years with one option to extend for one year (to 2023). At its meeting on 2021 May 31, Council authorized staff to pursue an extension of the lease term to allow for the shelter's continued operation until 2025 April 30. Staff are currently working with BC Housing to communicate the extension of the operation of the temporary shelter. As with the original lease term, the City is responsible for the lease cost but has assigned the lease to BC Housing.

3.2 Emergency Response Centre (ERC), 3680 Sperling Avenue

In response to the impacts of COVID-19, including the need to reduce capacity at the Douglas Shelter as noted above, the City has worked with BC Housing to open an Emergency Response Centre for 40 homeless individuals on the east parking lot of the Burnaby Sports Complex at 3680 Sperling Avenue

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(*attached as Appendix #1*). To facilitate the establishment of the ERC, the City entered into a licensing agreement with BC Housing to install modular trailers on the site. BC Housing funds the operation of the ERC and Progressive Housing Society operates the centre. The centre operates 24 hours a day, seven days a week.

The ERC was established as an interim measure while work to develop 43 new supportive housing units at Norland Place (3986 Norland Avenue) is underway. When completed, residents of the ERC will transition to the new supportive housing units. The original license agreement term for the ERC was from 2020 October 28 to 2021 June 30. At its meeting on 2021 June 14, Council authorized staff to extend the licensing agreement to 2021 December 31. BC Housing has now advised that this timeline is not feasible and requested an extension of the licensing agreement to 2022 August 31. At its meeting on 2021 November 22, Council approved the extension of the licensing agreement. Staff are currently working to prepare the necessary documentation.

3.3 COVID-19 Isolation Centre

In addition to establishing ERCs in a number of municipalities, BC Housing has secured rooms in local hotels to allow homeless individuals who are sick or immunocompromised to self-isolate. In Burnaby, BC Housing has secured up to 34 beds in a local hotel that can be used for homeless individuals who need to isolate. BC Housing and Progressive Housing Society oversee the funding and management of the beds. Funding for the isolation centre beds has been provided to the end of 2022 March.

3.4 Extreme Weather Shelters

The Task Force to End Homelessness in Burnaby coordinates the activation, notification, and operations of Burnaby's two extreme weather shelters. BC Housing funds the extreme weather response program (through the Homelessness Services Association of BC) and Lookout Housing and Health Society operates the shelters with other community organizations and members. The Southside Community Church at 7135 Walker Avenue provides up to 12 beds from the 1st to the 15th of the month and the Westminster Bible Chapel at 7540 6th Street provides up to 10 beds from the 16th to the end of the month. The extreme weather shelters are activated when conditions are deemed severe enough to present substantial threat to the life and/or health of homeless persons¹. When activated, the shelters will operate from 8:30pm to 8:00am, between 2021 October 15 and 2022 March 31.

4.0 CITY OF BURNABY – ADDITIONAL SERVICES

In response to extreme cold weather, the City is also preparing an emergency response plan for the 2021/2022 winter season. The additional services are to augment existing initiatives and capacity aforementioned in *Section 3.0* if required for an emergency situation.

¹ Extreme weather is defined with any or a combination of the following weather patterns (but not limited to): 1) temperatures at or below zero degrees Celsius, where temperatures are not absolute and are flexible to other weather conditions; 2) wind chill to feel like two degrees Celsius; 3) snow accumulation; 4) three or more days of rainfall that make it difficult or impossible for individuals to remain dry; 5) freezing rain and/or sleet; and 6) severe wind warning. For more information: <http://burnabyhomeless.org/burnaby-extreme-weather-response/>

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The proposed plan is to open a temporary emergency warming centre during an extreme cold weather event when existing services reach or anticipate reaching maximum capacity. Considerations to open a warming centre include the following climate assessment factors: temperature, wind chill, snow accumulation, severe wind, freezing rain, and forecasted duration of severe weather. Similar to the Extreme Heat Response activation guidelines, the activation of emergency warming centres would be through the Emergency Planning Committee.

The City's emergency warming centre would be opened within 72 hours notice and during evening hours only should an extreme cold weather event be predicted. The City's emergency warming centre would be opened in coordination with community partners. Staff are currently working to identify an appropriate site.

5.0 CONCLUSION

At its Closed meeting held on 2021 November 22, Council approved the City's response to homelessness for the 2021/2022 winter season. This report provides Council with information and updates on existing and additional services for the 2021/2022 winter season.

It is therefore recommended that Council receive this report for information purposes and forward a copy of this report to the Social Planning and Public Safety Committees for information.



E.W. Kozak, Director
PLANNING AND BUILDING

MM/KO/sa



Dave Critchley, Director
PUBLIC SAFETY AND COMMUNITY
SERVICES

Attachment

Copied to:	Deputy Chief Administrative Officer and Chief Financial Officer	Fire Chief
	Director Corporate Services	Chief Librarian
	Director Engineering	Chief Information Officer
	OIC – RCMP	City Solicitor
	Director Human Resources	City Clerk
	Director Parks, Recreation and Cultural Services	Chief License Inspector
	Assistant Director, Civic Building Projects	

