

PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE

TO: MAYOR AND COUNCILLORS

SUBJECT: 2024/2025 EMERGENCY WARMING CENTRE OPERATIONS SUMMARY

RECOMMENDATION:

THAT the report titled “2024/2025 Emergency Warming Centre Operations Summary” dated April 23, 2025, of the Public Safety Committee meeting, be received for information.

REPORT

The Public Safety Committee, at its meeting held on April 23, 2025, received and adopted the attached report providing Council with a summary of the City of Burnaby's 2024/2025 Emergency Warming Centre response.

On behalf of the Public Safety
Committee,

Councillor J. Wang
Chair

Councillor M. Santiago
Vice Chair

TO: PUBLIC SAFETY COMMITTEE (PSC)
FROM: GENERAL MANAGER COMMUNITY SAFETY
SUBJECT: **2024/2025 EMERGENCY WARMING CENTRE OPERATIONS SUMMARY**
PURPOSE: To provide a summary report of the City of Burnaby's 2024/2025 Emergency Warming Centre response.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report titled "2024/2025 Emergency Warming Centre Operations Summary" dated April 23, 2025, be received for information.

1.0 POLICY SECTION

This report aligns with the following Council-adopted policies, plans, and strategies:

- Housing and Homelessness Strategy (2021);
- Community Safety Plan (2020);
- Mayor's Task Force on Unsheltered Community Members (2024);
- City's Equity Policy (2020); and
- Burnaby Strategic Plan (2022)

2.0 BACKGROUND

Since 2018, the City of Burnaby has taken an active role in providing shelter services to community members experiencing homelessness. Initially, the City operated its own facilities seven days a week during colder months. However, regular shelter services have since transferred to the Province, with BC Housing funding the year-round Emergency Shelter at 2294 Douglas Road (operated by Progressive Housing Society) and a temporary winter shelter at the Buller Avenue warehouse.

Three forms of shelter services are available to individuals experiencing homelessness in Burnaby during the colder months:

1. **24/7 Emergency Shelters** operated by Progressive Housing Society:
 - 2294 Douglas Road (40 beds, available year-round)
 - 7320 Buller Avenue (40 beds, available during winter months)

2. **Extreme Weather Response Shelters** operated by Lookout Society:
 - The Neighbourhood Church, 7135 Walker Avenue (20 mats)
 - Westminster Bible Chapel, 7540 6th Street (27 mats)
3. **Emergency Warming Centre** operated by the City of Burnaby:
 - 7320 Buller Avenue (20 mats)

2.1 Activation Criteria

The City of Burnaby activates Emergency Warming Centres (“EWC”) during periods of extreme winter weather. Activation decisions are made based on multiple factors which may include:

- Extreme freezing temperatures
- Capacity at existing shelter locations
- Severe weather alerts issued by Environment Canada

2.2 Location

A City-owned warehouse located at 7320 Buller Avenue was used as the site for the 2024/2025 EWC season. A separate section of the Buller warehouse was also home to the 40-bed temporary winter shelter operated by Progressive Housing Society from November 15, 2024 and is scheduled to close May 1, 2025. The temporary winter shelter typically runs at capacity once opened, with the EWC serving as emergency overflow capacity.

The EWC space allows for 20 sleeping mats to be comfortably accommodated. This space was also chosen because it permitted the construction of a wheelchair ramp on Buller Avenue and a space that allowed patrons to store large items such as shopping carts and bicycles outside.

2.3 Staffing

The City and CUPE Local 23 have signed a Letter of Understanding (LOU) that allows for existing City staff to be on standby and rapidly deployed from their regular positions to the warming centre if needed. Positions covered under the LOU include Supervisors, Leaders, and Custodial staff.

Staff were divided into two teams and deployed on four-day rotations. Each team worked a maximum of 4 consecutive shifts of 12 hours. In the event an activation lasted for more than 4 consecutive days during a deployment, the second team would be deployed, and would continue with the rotation until the EWC was de-activated.

3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

Over the 2024/2025 winter season the EWC was activated on two separate occasions for a total period of 18 days. During this period the EWC had 182 guests, which included 132 male and 50 female guests. The season was a success with no major incidents and guests expressing appreciation for the support from the City.

EWC guests were provided with warm beverages, snacks, free wi-fi, and sleeping mats. All guests were also offered referrals to the City's Intervention Support Program which assists individuals with housing, health, and income services.

Date	Male	Female	Total Guests
17-Jan	4	1	5
18-Jan	9	1	10
19-Jan	5	1	6
20-Jan	6	2	8
21-Jan	6	2	8
1-Feb	3	0	3
2-Feb	6	2	8
3-Feb	9	2	11
4-Feb	7	2	9
5-Feb	7	2	9
6-Feb	12	3	15
7-Feb	6	4	10
8-Feb	12	7	19
9-Feb	11	4	15
10-Feb	9	5	14
11-Feb	5	3	8
12-Feb	9	5	14
13-Feb	6	4	10
Total			182

4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Not applicable.

5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

Not applicable.

Respectfully submitted,

Justin Sekiguchi, Manager, Intervention Support
For
Dave Critchley, General Manager Community Safety

ATTACHMENTS

None

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

This report was prepared by Justin Sekiguchi, Manager, Intervention Support.