

TO: MAYOR & COUNCILLORS

FROM: GENERAL MANAGER PLANNING AND DEVELOPMENT AND
GENERAL MANAGER COMMUNITY SAFETY

SUBJECT: BURNABY SHELTER AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING STRATEGY

PURPOSE: To provide information on the Burnaby Shelter and Supportive Housing Strategy.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report titled “Burnaby Shelter and Supportive Housing Strategy”, dated June 10, 2025 be received for information.

1.0 POLICY SECTION

This report on shelters and homelessness services aligns with the following Council-adopted policies, plans and strategies:

- Interim Burnaby Housing Needs Report (2024);
- Mayor’s Task Force on Unsheltered Community Members (2024);
- Corporate Strategic Plan (2022);
- HOME: Burnaby’s Housing and Homelessness Strategy (2021);
- Community Safety Plan (2020);
- City’s Equity Policy (2020);
- Mayor’s Task Force on Community Housing (2019); and
- Social Sustainability Strategy (2011).

2.0 BACKGROUND

On June 24, 2024, Council endorsed the recommendations in the Mayor’s Task Force on Unsheltered Community Members Final Report. One of the recommendations included:

“Developing a shelter strategy for the City of Burnaby (Recommendation #1)”.

The HOME: Burnaby’s Housing and Homelessness Strategy (2021) also includes an action to:

“Develop a plan that identifies potential sites for supportive housing for people experiencing homelessness, and outlines on-site supports, in partnership with community organizations, BC Housing, and Fraser Health (Action 14.1)”.

Responding to the above actions, the purpose of this report is to provide information on the progress in developing a Burnaby Shelter and Supportive Housing strategy and the various homelessness services initiatives underway as part of the strategy.

3.0 GENERAL INFORMATION

To prevent pathways into homelessness, support pathways out of homelessness and continue building coordination and partnership, the HOME Strategy and the Mayor's Task Force on Unsheltered Community Members (Mayor's Task Force) both provide the direction to develop a Shelter and Supportive Housing Strategy (SSHS) for Burnaby.

3.1 Goal and Objectives

The goal of the SSHS is to provide a roadmap, including partnerships, timelines and advocacy for Burnaby's specific shelter and supportive housing needs. This work includes:

- Developing a coordinated multi-year, multi-disciplinary, integrated shelter and supportive housing strategy to respond to unsheltered community members based on identified community and space needs in Burnaby;
- Building partnerships to effectively align service delivery and promote innovation and integration in providing shelter and supportive housing for unsheltered community members; and
- Integrating health and well-being services into the delivery of shelter and supportive housing.

3.2 Expert Advisory Committee

As part of the strategy's development, an Expert Advisory Committee (Committee) has been established to assist the City's development of the strategy. Currently, in addition to City staff from the Planning and Development and Community Safety Departments, the Committee is comprised of representatives from:

- BC Housing;
- Fraser Health;
- Progressive Housing Society;
- Society to End Homelessness in Burnaby;
- Lookout Health and Housing Society; and
- Burnaby Division of Family Practice / Primary Care Network.

The Committee meetings are supported by a facilitator to allow all members, including the City, to engage as part of the strategy development process.

3.3 Timeline

Following the adoption of the Mayor's Task Force recommendations, the SSHS development began. The first Committee meeting was held in January 2025, wherein the Committee recognized the need to address and respond to the current housing situation for the City's unhoused individuals immediately, as well as to develop longer term actions throughout the strategy process. The Committee also expressed that the strategy be developed in a time-sensitive manner, in order to expedite the work and meet the ongoing needs of the Burnaby community. Specifically, the leases and funding

were set to expire at the temporary winter shelter at 7320 Buller Avenue and the temporary year-round shelter at 2294 Douglas Road on April 30, 2025. This would result in potentially losing 80 shelter spaces in Burnaby. To respond to this request, immediate actions were taken and further described below in Section 3.4.

The Committee will continue to meet throughout 2025 to guide the strategy directions that address immediate, medium and longer-term housing needs in Burnaby. The components of the strategy would include areas such as preserving existing shelter beds, expanding shelter capacity, develop supportive housing and ensuring long-term housing stability. Staff anticipates the completion of the final strategy by the end of this year. Staff will also report back to Council on the final report of the SSHS and include this work as part of the progress report on the Mayor's Task Force recommendations.

3.4 Strategy Initiatives – Status Update on Immediate Actions

3.4.1 Buller Winter Shelter Lease Extension Request

On February 25, 2025, Council approved the expanded use of 7320 Buller Avenue from a temporary winter shelter to a year-round 24/7 shelter, and authorized staff to request BC Housing to fund the expanded shelter service until a replacement shelter site was found, or until April 30, 2028. As a result, the City received correspondence from BC Housing that Provincial funding was not available to expand the temporary winter shelter as requested. However, BC Housing has responded to pursue funding for the temporary winter shelter next winter season.

3.4.2 Zoning Bylaw Text Amendment on Emergency Shelter

On February 25, 2025, Council approved proposed amendments to the Burnaby Zoning Bylaw to clarify the misinterpretation of the term "Temporary Shelter", and in its place use the term "Emergency Shelter". Emergency shelter broadens the definition to also permit shelter use during emergency situations, such as fires, earthquakes and similar disasters, in addition to those experiencing homelessness or at-risk of homelessness in Burnaby. The amendment also proposes to permit emergency shelters on lands owned, leased or controlled not only by the City, but also by other government bodies to facilitate additional opportunities to accommodate emergency shelters within Burnaby where appropriate.

3.4.3 Emergency Shelter at 3020 Gilmore Diversion

BC Housing acquired a property at 3020 Gilmore Diversion for the purpose of an 80-space emergency shelter. Announced in April 2025, this site would undergo necessary renovations and is anticipated to be operational in early 2026.

3.4.4 Douglas Shelter Lease Extension

The City and BC Housing confirmed with the property owner at 2294 Douglas Road that a lease extension is supportable until the emergency shelter at 3020 Gilmore Diversion is in operation. In doing so, this allows the transition from the Douglas Shelter to the 3020 Gilmore Diversion location without disruptions to the shelter participants.

3.4.5 Supportive and Complex Care Housing Request

On April 29, 2024, Council received a delegation from BC Housing and Fraser Health on new Complex Care Housing (CCH) funding announced for the region. 10 units of CCH have been designated for Burnaby with an opportunity to co-locate the units within a new supportive housing development. In alignment with the Mayor's Task Force, staff have been directed to report back to Council at a future date on options for the program. Staff have included this work as part of the SSHS process and are exploring the use of a City-owned site with BC Housing.

4.0 COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

On June 24, 2024, Council directed staff to provide a progress report on the recommendations contained in the Mayor's Task Force Final Report by September 30, 2025. Staff intends to provide a final report of the SSHS to Council and include this work as part of the progress report on the Mayor's Task Force recommendations. The City's webpage would also be updated as part of the progress report.

5.0 FINANCIAL CONSIDERATIONS

The development of the SSHS is part of the Mayor's Task Force implementation and included as part of the 2025-2029 Financial Plan. Any specific funding requests that arise as part of the SSHS will be identified as part of the final report and brought forward for Council's consideration as each potential project proceeds.

Respectfully submitted,

Lee-Ann Garnett, Deputy General Manager Planning and Development, on behalf of
E.W. Kozak, General Manager Planning and Development and
Dave Critchley, General Manager Community Safety

ATTACHMENTS

There are no attachments for this report.

REPORT CONTRIBUTORS

This report was prepared by Kai Okazaki, Planner 2 and reviewed by Justin Sekiguchi, Manager, Intervention Support and Johannes Schumann, Director Community Planning.