

Committee of the Whole Report For the Meeting of November 12, 2020

То:	Committee of the Whole	Date:	November 9, 2020
From:	Thomas Soulliere, Director of Parks, Recreation and Facilities		
Subject:	Implications of Sheltering Set-backs from Pr Parks and Open Spaces	ivate Pro	perty Boundaries Adjacent to

RECOMMENDATION

That Council receive this report for information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On November 5, 2020 Council directed staff to report back on November 12 on the implications of introducing a set-back requirement for private property boundaries for shelters erected in accordance with section 16A and 16B of the Parks Regulation Bylaw based on potential set-backs or 4 metres and 6 metres.

In September 2020, Council adopted amendments to the Parks Regulation Bylaw that primarily focused on mitigating health and safety risks for individuals seeking shelter in parks as well as individuals working in and visiting parks across the City. These amendments created set-backs from playgrounds, schools, pathways, environmentally and culturally sensitive areas and other features listed in the Bylaw where sheltering is not permitted. In many parks, these features are often adjacent to private property resulting in set-backs of shelters from property lines.

To evaluate the implications of the proposed requirement, staff applied the set-backs from private property to maps of the 12 parks that have access to washrooms and running water. Based on staff analysis, four of the twelve parks would not be impacted by the proposed new requirement. Eight of the twelve parks would be affected in some way, although most parks would only have minor changes to where sheltering is currently permitted. The most significant impacts would be for Oaklands Park and Vic West Park, with a substantial reduction in area available for sheltering in both parks. Maps showing the 4m and 6m set-backs can be found in Attachment A.

Other implications for Council consideration include the following:

- Significant work has been undertaken by Bylaw Services to communicate the recent • amendments with those sheltering in parks to build understanding about the changes approved in September, and further changes could have a negative impact on communications with this population.
- The use of a 6m set-back would introduce yet another distance that individuals sheltering • will need to learn about and apply.

- Undertaking Bylaw amendments, one-at-a-time has the potential to introduce enforcement and operational challenges, or other unintentional impacts.
- Further amendments will result in staff time to redesign, reprint, remove and reinstall all of the temporary signs that have been installed since the Bylaw amendments were adopted in September. Staff estimate that replacement costs will be approximately \$15,000.

Staff have assessed the changes and identified that even with the proposed new change, adequate space would still be available for sheltering throughout parks for the approximately 250 individuals believed to be currently experiencing homelessness in Victoria.

For Council's awareness, staff report few complaints specific to this issue received since the beginning of the pandemic and the increase volume of sheltering. When complaints are received by property owners, Bylaw Officers speak to the individual(s) sheltering in the park and encourage them to move to another area of the park where there may be less impact to adjacent property owners or park users. In the majority of situations this approach works well and the issue is resolved.

CONCLUSION

Amending the Parks Regulation Bylaw to include a 4metre or 6 metre set-back from private property boundaries will result in minor changes to most parks where sheltering is prohibited, with the most significant impacts anticipated at Oaklands Park and Vic West Park. Should Council decide to move forward with this adjustment, staff would update and install the necessary signage and communicate the change to individuals sheltering in City parks, as well as agencies providing services to this population.

Respectfully submitted,

Thomas Soulliere Director Parks, Recreation and Facilities

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

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Date: November 10, 2020

List of Attachments

Attachment A: Maps showing 4m/6m Set-backs in Parks with Washrooms Attachment B: Parks Regulation Amendment Bylaw No. 20-102