

Council Member Motion For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of October 24, 2024

To: Committee of the Whole Date: October 18, 2024

From: Councillor Krista Loughton and Mayor Marianne Alto

Subject: Emergency Weather Response Plan 2024/25

Rationale for Same-Day Consideration

To prepare for winter, an emergency weather response plan must be established during the first half of November, and Council does not meet on October 31.

Background

Every winter, BC Housing coordinates with local service providers to create the Extreme Weather Response Plan (EWR), which can be implemented to provide shelter for unhoused people and protect them from extreme winter weather. The plan establishes the weather activation criteria, identifies the regional coordinator, and identifies which service providers are participating, including the number of available spaces.

The City of Victoria Emergency Plan contains its own emergency weather response protocols, including the Emergency Winter Weather Response Plan. This plan is updated annually to reflect the changing capacity and needs of the community. If a weather emergency exists and all available resources have been exhausted, including the BC Housing EWR Plan, and a demand for additional spaces remains, the City of Victoria Emergency Winter Weather Response Plan will be activated, opening additional spaces which are often used by residents from other municipalities in the region who don't have EWR shelter services or adequate emergency plans for extreme weather.

In January 2024, an extreme weather event exceeded the capacity of BC Housing's EWR shelters and other existing resources. As a result, The City of Victoria activated the Emergency Winter Weather Response Plan and opened an additional emergency shelter operated by auxiliary fire department staff. The overcrowding posed several issues for Victoria, and it was uncovered that other municipalities sent people to Victoria for emergency weather shelter, assuming this was an acceptable action under a regional protocol. No such protocol exists.

RECOMMENDATION

- 1. That staff provide Council with an update on the 2024/25 Emergency Weather Response Plan for Victoria and what is planned for other regional municipalities on November 7, 2024.
- 2. That this motion be sent to Council to Follow Committee of the Whole today for same-day consideration.

Respectfully submitted,

Coun. Krista Loughton

Mayor Marianne Alto