



Governance and Priorities Committee Report

For the meeting of November 19, 2015

To: Governance and Priorities Committee **Date:** November 9, 2015
From: Jonathan Tinney, Director Sustainable Planning and Community Development
Subject: Status Report - Action Plan for Housing, Supports & City Services

RECOMMENDATION

That Council:

1. Receive the November 19, 2015 *Status Report- Action Plan for Housing, Supports and City Services for Sheltering in City Parks*; and
2. Approve the following *Action Plan* recommendations:
 - a. *Storage Project for People's Belongings*
 - i. That the City allocate up to \$85,000 in operating funding (2016) and up to \$45,000 in capital funding (2016) to establish a one-year pilot project storage facility for the belongings of people who are homeless to be funded from the 2015 surplus; and
 - ii. That the City undertakes a competitive procurement process to seek a service provider that will develop and operate the proposed storage facility for a one-year period consistent with the Terms of Reference outlined in Appendix A.
 - b. *Social Service Outreach Pilot Project*
 - i. That the City allocate up to \$80,000 in operating funding in 2016 to fund a one-year Social Service Outreach Pilot Project (Outreach Project) consistent with the terms of reference outlined in Appendix C to be funded from the 2015 surplus; and
 - ii. That the City proceeds to enter into a service agreement with the Victoria Cool Aid Society on terms satisfactory to staff to deliver the Outreach Project generally consistent with the Terms of Reference set out in Appendix C.
3. That Council direct staff to report back to Council at the February 18, 2016 Governance and Priorities Committee meeting.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On June 11, 2015 Council approved the *Action Plan for Housing, Supports and City Services for Sheltering in City Parks*. Over the past five months staff have been working to implement the initiatives outlined in the *Action Plan* many of which involve developing partnerships with organizations external to the City. This report is to provide the summary of public input received over the past few months, and seek direction from Council on two operational Initiatives detailed in the *Action Plan*:

1. *Storage Project for People's Belongings*
2. *Social Service Outreach Pilot Project*

City staff have been working with downtown service providers to encourage the development of a proposal for a storage facility that would provide a safe and secure location to store the belongings of people who are homeless. A proposed Terms of Reference (ToR) has been developed for such a facility (Appendix A) modelled after a facility operating near downtown Vancouver (Appendix B). While Council authorized a \$45,000 expenditure for a downtown storage facility, it is expected that the operating budget for one year would be about double that amount. Capital funding to set-up a storage facility would also be required, which may cost up to \$45,000. While staff have been undertaking discussions with some service providers, at this time, no specific proposals have been developed due to challenges related to the securing of specific sites and funding constraints. It is recommended that the City increase the potential funding available and stimulate interest in the service through a competitive procurement process.

In the second case, a Terms of Reference (Appendix C) for an Outreach Support Services Pilot Project (Outreach Service) has been developed by the City in dialogue with VicPD, Island Health, BC Housing, Victoria Cool-Aid Society and downtown service providers. While some of the service providers believe there are adequate services in the community VicPD, Island Health, BC Housing and Cool-Aid see value in increasing support services through the Outreach Service and evaluating their efficacy.

The Outreach Service is focused on identifying and directly assisting persons who are homeless to access housing and other support services. Through dialogue on the proposed ToRs it is clear that potential partners do not have their own funding sources to match City funding for this project as, which would enable a one-year pilot period. In light of this, the City needs to consider increasing the funding commitment to up to \$80,000 in order to extend the Outreach Services pilot for a one-year period.

During this past quarter, the City sought public input on potential temporary shelter options for those currently seeking shelter in City parks. More than 400 people participated, many of whom were without homes, to share their ideas. In addition to the public input at the workshop, 340 surveys were submitted online. Input received both through those in person and online, was consistent. It highlighted a strong desire to see expanded or new buildings used for sheltering, rather than an expansion or designation of sheltering programs in specific City parks.

Council also initiated several outreach and policy actions, including the adoption of a *Regional Housing First Strategy* that requests the Capital Regional District to institute a capital levy to fund housing for people who are homeless (Appendix D).

In an effort to determine next steps and support ongoing implementation, staff have also engaged consulting support to provide additional technical input and to develop a strategic plan that identifies additional short-term actions for the City to undertake beyond those laid out in the *Action Plan for Housing, Supports and City Services for Sheltering in City Parks*. This next phase of action will also address and define the City's role in leading, advocating and/or supporting these initiatives through the effective deployment of City resources. This strategy will draw on the public input received as part of the recent Sheltering Solutions engagement along with direct engagement with local service providers, research and advocacy groups, and government agencies engaged in housing and homelessness activities.

Staff are cognizant of the delay in getting this update to Council and will commit to a follow-up reporting on outcomes of the actions laid out above at the February 18, 2016 GPC meeting.

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to provide information regarding the status of the *Action Plan for Housing, Supports and City Services* and to seek direction on funding and terms of reference for two operational initiatives outlined in the *Action Plan*.

BACKGROUND

The lack of adequate housing opportunities for homeless people in Victoria has resulted in many taking shelter in City parks. These numbers are highest during summer months when there are fewer shelter beds available, however recent feedback from service providers indicates continued strong demand for shelter beds in recent weeks. This despite the reopening and expansion of annual cold wet weather beds. Even with these new resources, a lack of sufficient sheltering and related housing options are contributing to ongoing sheltering activities by individuals in public spaces which is generating a number of impacts on City parks and resources.

The *Action Plan* approved by Council on June 11, 2015 contains a number of strategies and initiatives designed to address the needs of homeless people and to improve the City's service response to the impacts of sheltering activities in City parks.

Two operational initiatives were identified and endorsed by Council along with funding that was believed necessary to enable implementation:

1. Storage Project for People's Belongings
 - \$45,000 authorized for this project with an expectation that a service provider or partner would match the City's expenditure to enable the project.
2. Social Service Outreach Pilot Project
 - \$35,000 authorized for this project with an expectation that a service provider or partner would match the City's expenditure to enable the project.

City staff toured a storage facility operating in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside to learn more about facility operations and success factors. A summary of the key points learned about the First United Storage Bin Facility is detailed in Appendix B, including the hours and days of operation, the service model and the set-up and operating costs. In discussion with local service providers, staff developed a Terms of Reference that are recommended for consideration for a similar model here in Victoria (Appendix A).

City staff have also been in dialogue with VicPD, Island Health, BC Housing, Victoria Cool-Aid Society and downtown service providers to develop ToR for an outreach project (Appendix C). The proposed ToR are designed to provide a field-based outreach service that fits in between the various services offered by downtown service providers. The model envisions direct contact by a Homeless Outreach Worker with people who are sleeping in City parks and public spaces, to identify their housing and support needs, and to provide assistance in reaching these services. A project description and job description comprise the ToR for the outreach project, which is set out in Appendix C.

ISSUES AND ANALYSIS

1. *Storage Project for People's Belongings*

People who are homeless often have no place to store their personal belongings and as a result they must pack them along wherever they go. This has a variety of impacts on each individual person, such as the physical effort to transport belongings, their exposure to the elements and the interference with attending appointments or work. Carrying one's belongings around can also result in them being left in public places for periods of time or being abandoned when the load becomes too great. This activity can have a visible impact on the aesthetics of public spaces, and in extreme cases can damage sensitive areas in City parks.

The proposed storage facility is meant to alleviate some of the personal and public space impacts that arise from people carrying their belongings around with them.

City staff have been actively working with a downtown service provider to encourage them to develop and submit a service proposal for consideration of City funding. Unfortunately, a proposal for this service has not come forward, despite several discussions and examinations of potential options with service providers.

City staff also toured a facility near downtown Vancouver to learn about their operations and the benefits achieved through this service. A summary of this model, and the practices that support its success are outlined in Appendix B.

Staff reviewed the Vancouver model with some of the Victoria service providers and developed ToR that may be suitable for Victoria (Appendix A).

The annual cost to operate the Vancouver storage facility is about \$85,000, which is \$40,000 more than the funding authorized by the City for a Victoria storage facility. One-time set-up costs for the Vancouver facility were about \$45,000. To stimulate interest in establishing a storage facility in Victoria, the City should consider increasing the potential funding available for the project and seek project submissions through a request for proposals process. Staff will report back to Council on the outcomes of this approach at the February 18, 2016 GPC meeting.

2. Social Service Outreach Pilot Project

The proposed outreach services project is designed to be a field-oriented outreach service that has direct contact with people who are homeless and sleeping in City parks and public spaces. Working with VicPD and City Bylaw Officers the Homeless Outreach Worker will have early and ongoing contact with people sheltering in City parks to identify their needs, help direct those people to services that address their needs and to develop a better understanding of the housing and service needs of these individuals. The intent of this position is to compliment and fill gaps within those outreach services currently offered by Island Health, VicPD (inclusive of the proposed expansion of these services) and others which are currently fully subscribed and focus more on individuals with mental health issues are not solely focused on housing and shelter.

Victoria Cool-Aid Society has agreed to be the City's primary partner in delivering the outreach services. The City will fund Cool-Aid through a service agreement and Cool-Aid will coordinate and supervise the activities of the Homeless Outreach Worker who will work in the field with VicPD and Bylaw Officers. The proposed service model would best integrate the services offered by Cool-Aid and other service providers to those people in need.

A steering committee composed of representatives from the City, VicPD, Island Health, BC Housing and downtown service providers will provide strategic guidance, material support, operational advice and communications between each organization and the outreach worker. Better information sharing and service coordination between agencies is another expected outcome.

\$35,000 was approved in the action plan recommendations to support an outreach project. It was originally expected that the City would be able to attract a social service or health service provider as a partner who could match the City's funding to enable the pilot project to operate for up to one year. While several agencies are prepared to offer some in-kind support none of the partners currently at the table have funding available to allocate to this project. If additional funding is not available, the project may still be able to proceed for a period of up to six months.

A pilot project of this shorter duration is no longer recommended as it's believed that this timeframe is

too short to establish successful relationships, make service referrals, and to measure outcomes from the Outreach Project. Staff recommend Council consider increasing the available funding up to \$80,000 to enable the pilot project to operate for one full year. In addition, it is recommended that the Outreach Project commence in January 2016, to coincide with the time period when outdoor sheltering activities are greatest:

- Project Initiation - December 2015 to January 2016
 - Staffing, establishment of governance & operational relationships, field work methods and procedures
- Project Service Delivery – January 2016 to November 2016
 - Undertake field work, referrals and follow-ups; compile information for reporting out
- Project Reporting – November 2016 to December 2016
 - Prepare final report for review and approval by Steering Committee, report back to Council, assess program continuation

2015 – 2016 Housing Initiatives

1.A. Increase Supply of Emergency Shelter Spaces

BC Housing had advised previously that it was not prepared to provide funding for the requested adult and youth summer shelter spaces outlined in the *Action Plan*. However, it was recently announced that BC Housing has provided funding to Our Place for an additional 40 temporary adult shelter spaces for the months of October to March. These beds were made available as of October 15, 2015 and are located at the First Metropolitan Church on Balmoral Road.

1.B. Micro-Housing

A local micro-housing group incorporated as Micro-Housing Victoria Society (MVHS) is developing their organizational capacity to support the development, implementation and operation of a micro-housing village in the City of Victoria. At the October 1, 2015 Council meeting, Council approved a \$25,000 grant to assist VMHS in their initial stages of project development:

1. *That the Victoria Micro Housing Society be allocated interim funding of \$25,000 such funding to be drawn from the 'additional operating funding of up to \$350,000 from 2015 contingencies' already allocated to 'support specific Action Plan initiatives, subject to final approval by the City Manager', to execute the following actions:*
 - a. *Develop design/build proposal with architectural drawings.*
 - b. *Implement ongoing and regular outreach and social inclusion with potential future residents, including a 'resident interest' inventory.*
 - c. *Implement public engagement and consultation on the design/build concept, including engagement with Community and Neighbourhood Associations, Community Association Land Use Committees and processes, before a site is selected, so neighbours are involved in the conversation at an early and ongoing stage.*
 - d. *Outreach with social services to introduce the concept to agencies, to plan and build future relationships with the village and villagers.*
 - e. *Develop intake protocols and a self-management Memorandum of Understanding between residents, VMHS, and other partners.*

Prior to receiving the grant, VMHS will submit a detailed budget to the Director of Finance.

1.C. Designated Sheltering Site in a Park

In late July, residents in the vicinity of Topaz Park expressed strong concern with the proposed use of a part of the park as a designated sheltering site. These concerns were voiced to the Mayor and

members of Council in a meeting held in Topaz Park on July 30. In response to these concerns, the City postponed any immediate plans to implement a designated sheltering site in a City park and on September 16, 2015 hosted the hands-on *Sheltering Solutions Workshop* at the Crystal Garden to identify potential solutions for temporary housing. Approximately 400 people attend a workshop at the Crystal Garden and shared ideas and feedback about potential opportunities. Over 300 people without homes attended and participated in table session with neighbours, City staff, and social agencies. The insight provided by those living in parks was invaluable to the session, and many others in attendance remarked of how much they learned directly from those in attendance.

Participants were provided with eight key topics that members of the community had submitted over the summer months, but could also suggest their own ideas for discussion at each table. These suggestions served as a starting point for discussion at the workshop, where participants broke out into facilitated groups to brainstorm and share ideas. Input was collected by way of worksheets as well as on flip charts. A number of solutions were discussed and collected. The top three solutions chosen and discussed by workshop participants were:

- Funding to make existing building into temporary shelters (e.g. vacant motels, City facilities, provincial government facilities, etc.)
- Funding to create new shelters or temporary housing facilities.
- Supervised sheltering sites on private or public land (not in a City park) with support services.

A corresponding online survey was launched the same day of the workshop, and was available for two-and-a-half weeks, providing the community an opportunity to share their ideas on potential sheltering solutions. 340 respondents participated in the online survey and were asked to rank their two most preferred solutions from the same list provided to the workshop attendees. The top three most-frequently ranked solutions were:

- | | |
|--|-------|
| • Funding to make existing buildings into temporary shelters
(e.g. vacant motels, City facilities, provincial government facilities, etc.). | 76.8% |
| • Fund additional beds at existing shelters. | 49.6% |
| • Funding to create new shelters or temporary housing facilities. | 29.5% |

The workshop and online survey were promoted on the City's website (www.victoria.ca/sheltering) and associated Have Your Say portal, media release, social media channels (Twitter and Facebook), and by email to close to 500 stakeholders.

A more detailed summary of the feedback received as Appendix D.

2.A. Proposals for New Transitional & Supportive Housing

On August 27, 2015, Council approved a grant of \$112,000 to the Victoria Cool Aid Society for the development of 45 units of affordable rental housing within the project to be constructed at 3211 – 3223 Quadra Street in Saanich. This affordable housing project – the first in which the City has provided a grant outside the municipality - is expected to increase vacancies in the supportive and emergency housing supply, as people transition to more stable forms of housing.

On October 1, 2015, Council adopted a resolution championing a *Regional Housing First Strategy* (Appendix D). The resolution calls upon the CRD and partner agencies in health and social services to set-up a capital levy to fund the construction of up to 367 new supportive housing units.

Future Actions

The management and support for homelessness and sheltering services is not a primary service of the City of Victoria and given the scale of the issues involved, staff feel that additional expertise and support is necessary to identify and assess future activities. As such, staff have engaged consultants Karen O'Shannacery (founder and former CEO of the Lookout Emergency Aid Society) and Nathan Edelson (former Senior Planner for the City of Vancouver who worked most of his career in the Downtown Eastside neighbourhood) to provide advisory services that aim to do the following:

- 1) Support a discussion with City Council on the role the City should take to address homelessness, and within that role to;
- 2) Identify key strategies and additional actions that the City can take to either directly address or support other actors in the provision of temporary shelter of and/or permanent housing of homeless individuals in the City.

The consultants will undertake the work via the following key task areas.

1. An assessment of current City programs/activities
2. Examination of best practice in other municipalities/regions
3. Engagement with local service providers (with an emphasis on more immediate need housing/services) to provide guidance on current program coverage and gaps
4. Engagement with government agencies to provide guidance on current program coverage and gaps
5. Inputs from Sheltering Workshop, other engagements with Homeless Impacted Individuals if possible.

Work is already underway and a draft action plan will be reported to Council for their consideration and to provide further direction to staff at the February 18, 2016 GPC meeting. This work is to be funded from existing operational consulting budgets.

OPTIONS & IMPACTS

The two recommendations requesting Council direction in this report relate to operational initiatives:

1. Storage Facility – Increase funding by \$85,000 in 2016 to enable a one-year pilot project; and
2. Outreach Project – Increase funding by \$45,000 in 2016 to enable a one-year pilot project.

2015 – 2018 Strategic Plan

Council previously approved these two Operational Initiatives as part of the *Action Plan* recommendations in June 2015. The *Action Plan* is consistent with the City's Strategic Plan Objective #7 – Facilitate Social Inclusion and Community Wellness.

Impacts to 2015 – 2018 Financial Plan

The 2015 Annual Budget contains expenditure allocations for these two *Action Plan* initiatives:

- Storage Facility: \$45,000 from Strategic Objectives Fund
- Outreach Project: \$35,000 from *Action Plan* funding of \$350,000.

The expected impact of these two recommendations is as follows:

1. Storage Facility:
 - Re-allocate approved funding of \$45,000 for one-time expense in 2015 for set-up costs.

- Increase funding to \$85,000 to be expended in 2016 for operating costs.
2. Outreach Project:
- Increase funding by \$45,000 to a total of \$80,000 to be expended in 2016.

The 2016 financial plan does not currently have an expenditure allocation to fund the increased costs for the two recommended operational initiatives. To enable these recommendations \$165,000 in additional funding is required; a funding option for Council's consideration would be 2015 Surplus.

Official Community Plan Consistency Statement

These two operational initiatives are consistent with the Official Community Plan objectives set out in Section 13 - Housing and Homelessness, Addressing Homelessness - Actions 13.36 to 13.39.

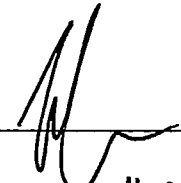
Respectfully submitted,



Jonathan Tinney
Director of Sustainable Planning and Community Development

Report accepted and recommended by the City Manager:

Date:


November 12, 2015

List of Attachments

Appendix A – Terms of Reference - Downtown Victoria Storage Project for People in Need

Appendix B – First United Storage Bin Facility (Vancouver, BC)

Appendix C – Project Description and Job Description – Outreach Project

Appendix D – Sheltering Solutions Workshop and Online Survey – Engagement Summary, Detailed Feedback and Supporting Materials and Media Clippings

Appendix E – Council Resolution of October 1, 2015 – Regional Housing First Strategy

Appendix A

Proposed Downtown Victoria Storage Facility for People in Need – Terms of Reference

The City of Victoria is seeking a potential service arrangement with a downtown service provider to develop and operate a facility for storing the personal belongings of people who are homeless.

The proposed storage facility is intended to achieve a number of objectives:

- Provide a safe and secure area for a person to store and access their personal belongings;
- Create peace of mind for the person whose belongings are stored;
- Reduce the amount of time and energy a person spends moving their belongings around the city;
- Reduce the amount of abandoned chattels on City property; and
- Improve the aesthetics of public places and parks.

The City is seeking a service provider who will facilitate the development and successful operation of a supervised storage facility for a trial period of 12 months. Interested service providers will identify a proposed location for the facility and any direct contribution they can make to support the operation of the facility. The City is prepared to help fund the operation of a storage facility for up to twelve months.

The following are suggested attributes for a storage facility:

- The facility should be comprised of a secure storage area, a separate indoor area to sort and stow personal belongings indoors, and office space for the service provider.
- The storage area should be dry and heated, and able to accommodate the personal belongings of approximately 50 – 75 persons
- Personal belongings, such as clothing and personal effects, should be stored in separate containers, each assigned to an individual
- The property should have a sufficient buffer from adjacent properties that are likely to be impacted by the storage facility
- The location should be near the downtown, and within a reasonable walking distance of other support facilities such as Our Place, Rock Bay Landing and Queens Manor.
- The facility should operate a minimum of eight hours per day, at times convenient for facility patrons

In order to ensure that the facility operates as it is intended and minimizes impacts in the neighbourhood, the following considerations are recommended:

- Patrons are able to check in at frequent intervals
- Patrons are not permitted to store perishable goods, drugs or weapons
- Patrons are not permitted to loiter outside the facility or on adjacent properties
- The facility operates seven days per week
- Service hours generally between 7:00 a.m. and 11:00 a.m. and 5:00 p.m. and 9:00 p.m.
- Patrons are limited to 15 - 20 minutes per visit
- Each patron will be assigned one container only
- The storage area will be separate and secure from the sorting and stowing area
- A code of conduct is in place to support respectful behaviour on site
- Consequences are in place for breaches of the code of conduct or other unacceptable behaviour

Appendix B

First United Storage Bin Facility

Access

- The hours of the facility are from 8:00 a.m. - 12:00 noon and 4:00 p.m. - 8:00 p.m.
- Would like to open 6:00 a.m. – 12 noon and 4:00p.m. - 10:00 p.m., but cost is too high
- In 3 months, they had 4,600 transactions
- Turnover is about 10 clients a week (5%)
- There is a waiting list and capacity could easily be doubled

Staff

- There are 1-2 staff, depending on busy times.
- Staff are paid employees.
- There are sometimes volunteers when moving materials that have not been claimed, etc.
- The street community does not volunteer at the facility

Storage Amenities

- The facility is approximately 1,200 square feet and stores 200 Rubbermaid tubs and 10-15 rolling suitcases.
- 60 tubs are reserved for overnight stays at the shelter
- 25-30 users leave camping gear for the day and then retrieve it before nightfall
- Customers must check in each day
- There is no long term storage
- Unclaimed goods are held for a month, then moved to disposal
- Unclaimed clothing items are not reused

Shopping Carts

- Shopping carts are preferred by clients as they hold more material
- Storage for up to 20 carts

Contents

- One container is allowed
- We respect that individuals have a right to store whatever they consider important to them



- We do not examine contents unless we have reason to believe that prohibited goods are being stored (e.g. food, weapons)
- Weight restriction was imposed so that the tubs are not too heavy for staff
- Pest control measures are in place

Loitering

- Folks generally do not hang out here now that trust has been established with the facility
- There is “no smoking” around the entrance to the facility
- No selling of goods is allowed out front or clients will be banned from access
- There are about 15 clients who stay there throughout their open hours, sorting out their stuff repetitiously

Location

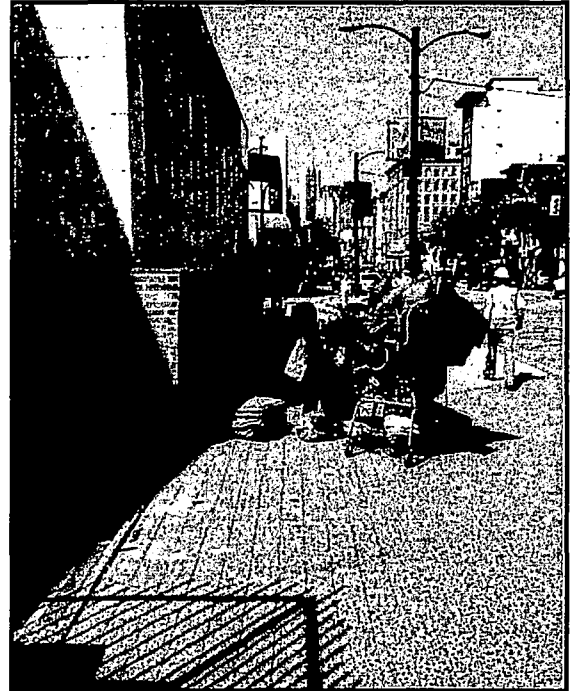
- A location near where people gather already with their belongings or on a travel route is effective
- Neighbouring businesses don't complain, as the storage facility has improved the local area and there are fewer materials left on the street.

Security

- Clients register under their own names
- Sometimes a password is requested
- Security of each storage bin is important
- One problem occurs when folks store stuff in someone else's bin and can't retrieve it when they want it
- They impose strict rules and know how to handle the clientele
- There are escalating bans (ranging from a single day to a permanent ban) for contraventions of policy, unacceptable behaviour, etc.
- Security measures are in place
- Staff continually gauge the climate and take appropriate precautions

Costs

- It costs \$85,000 a year for operations
- It cost \$45,000 to set up the facility



Discussion

Service

The storage facility provides a valuable service to the street community. It provides a service otherwise not available to the street community, as well as establishing another point of contact for outreach.

It can be considered facilitative and accommodating to homelessness, if it is not a part of an integrated program for transitioning clients to housing with required supportive services.

Functionality and Block Impact

The service appears to function quite well operationally. Staff suggest that neighbouring businesses have not complained and that some have said that the storage facility has reduced the amount of chattels in the street. The storage facility does not directly contribute to street disorder to a significant degree given its location in area where there is a very high presence of street entrenched individuals.

The demand for storage is primarily from the general area and not specifically users of other services at the site. Clients return to the site daily and some (5-10%) stay to sort their materials through much of the operating hours. There is a limited amount of outside space for sorting and interaction on the property.

Given that conditions in Victoria are not equal to those in Vancouver's Downtown Eastside, the choice of an appropriate location and facility size is extremely important.

Victoria Site

A site should:

- Be close enough to be walkable within the timeframes of daily activities of clients
- Not be co-located with other services that would induce people to stay longer than necessary
- Be away from sensitive adjacent property uses
- Have adequate on-site sorting and interaction space, preferably indoors

While location is important, managerial policies are critical for ensuring neighbourhood impacts are mitigated. An

issue with management approaches is that it relies on the organization and particular staff to ensure that policies are established and sustained. Some policies could be:

- an escalating reduction of privileges where behaviour issues arise
- no loitering on site or on adjacent properties
- limit loading/unloading time
- no allowance for shopping carts, unless they are part of a special program

Appendix C – Outreach Project Description

Outreach Support Service for People Sheltering in Parks and Streets

Background

On June 4, 2015 Victoria City Council Approved an *Action Plan for Housing, Supports and City Services for Homeless People Sheltering in City Parks*. One of the specific initiatives within the *Action Plan* includes the approval of \$35,000 to support additional outreach staff to people sheltering out-of-doors. Using this funding, Council directed staff to:

Work in partnership with BC Housing, social services providers and Island Health to increase outreach resources for homeless people - add a social support outreach position on a pilot basis to accompany Bylaw Services and Victoria Police Department to assess needs and, where possible, direct homeless people to services.

Need Identification

There are a number of resources that are currently operating that are oriented toward meeting the needs of individuals in the community who are either homeless or at-risk of homelessness, including:

- ACT and VICOT Teams – community-based services and supports for people with mental health diagnoses
- 713 Outreach – community-based outreach services and supports for people with significant addictions issues
- Housing Outreach Workers – non-profit based staff who provide assistance to people trying to get off the streets and get established in either emergency shelter, supportive or permanent housing

Consultations with various staff employed within these programs have confirmed that these services are fully subscribed and, because of the need to meet existing service demands or restrictions on their capacity to work outside of their respective agencies, these workers are unable to engage with many of the people sleeping rough in the city. Police and Bylaw Services staff estimate that the number of people sheltering in parks in the summer months range between 80 and 130 people on any given night. During the winter months, a number of these individuals seek shelter on the extra mats provided through the winter months and during periods of extreme weather.

Partners

Since Council approval, several organizations have been approached and have agreed to work together to coordinate an effective pilot initiative. These partners include:

- AIDS Vancouver Island
- BC Housing
- City of Victoria – Bylaw Services and Community Planning Division
- Cool Aid Society
- Dandelion Society

- Island Health
- Our Place Society
- Victoria Police Department

Goal and Objectives

The overall goal of this initiative is to gain a better understanding of the factors that are leading individuals to shelter in public spaces and to assess their vulnerabilities and resiliencies. It will be designed as a social service support that will complement the interventions of Bylaw and Police staff with people sheltering in the parks and other public spaces within the city.

The primary objectives of the project include: .

- Improve the awareness of those sheltering in parks of the services available to assist them in achieving better housing and health outcomes.
- Increase the understanding of project partners of the challenges and barriers these individuals face in accessing housing and other social and health services.

With an understanding that there are severe limitations on finding permanent or temporary housing solutions for those sheltering in public, *where possible*, this program will endeavor to also advance the following secondary objectives

- Increase the proportion of people sheltering in public spaces who are accessing supportive services in the community.
- Improve the sheltering outcomes for people who are sheltering in parks and other public spaces.
- Decrease the number of people sheltering in parks and other public spaces.
- Decrease the level of resources being used to patrol and respond to issues related to people sheltering in parks and other public spaces.

Implementation

In order to ensure effective coordination of this service within already existing resources in the community, the initiative will be overseen by an Implementation Team made up of representatives from each of the project partner organizations. The Steering Committee will be responsible for:

- Reviewing and approving the goals, objectives, governance and implementation plan for the pilot project as well as the job description and duties of the Outreach Worker staff position,
- Identifying and, where possible, providing material resources to support the operations of the project,
- Providing direction and advice to project staff that supports the effective coordination of this support within the network of existing community services,
- Reviewing reports summarizing project outputs, assessment findings and intervention outcomes.

- Reviewing identified opportunities and barriers and working collectively to identify potential solutions.
- Reporting within their respective organizations on project findings and accomplishments and, where possible, advocating for program or systems change to better meet the needs of these individuals.

Project Timeline and Budget

Option 1 - Duration of Project with Available Funding (not recommended)

October 2015 to March 2016 (up to six months)

Budget

Description	Amount
Staff Salary	\$35,000
Office Rent	In kind
Computer/Information Tech	In kind
Communications	\$1,200
Office Supplies	\$500
Transportation	In kind
Total	\$36,700

Option 2 - Duration of Project with Additional Funding (recommended)

January 2016 to December 2016

Budget

Description	Amount
Staff Salary	\$70,000
Office Rent	In kind
Computer/Information Tech	In kind
Communications	\$1,200
Office Supplies	\$800
Transportation	\$5,000
Miscellaneous	\$3,000
Total	\$80,000

JOB DESCRIPTION - Homeless Outreach Worker

Summary

Reporting to the [TBD] the Homeless Outreach Worker will provide assistance and support to individuals sleeping rough in Victoria. The position will support the efforts of Victoria Police and City of Victoria Bylaw Enforcement staff responding to concerns regarding individuals sheltering in public spaces in the city (parks, streets, boulevards, etc.). The primary role is to engage and build trusting relationships with such individuals, to complete basic assessments of their needs and provide referral to, or direct assistance in accessing harm reduction supplies and support services such as housing, addiction recovery and mental health programs in the community. The Outreach Worker will document the needs of these individuals as well as their disposition toward seeking and accessing support services and any gaps in services available in the community to address unmet needs.

Duties and Responsibilities

- Engage and build supportive relationships with individuals taking shelter in public spaces such as parks, boulevards, streets and sidewalks.
- Using the DESC Vulnerability Assessment Tool, assess the resilience and vulnerabilities of individuals and use the results to identify unmet needs.
- Maintains an awareness of and acts as a liaison by building and maintaining constructive working relationships with housing providers, social and health service providers, mental health and addictions outreach program staff and other formal and informal supports in the community.
- Provide direct service in a way that encourages and promotes independence by helping individuals develop and assisting them in following-through on short-term strategies to deal with emergent needs and issues – e.g., accessing housing, personal health, crisis management and daily living supports.
- Facilitates individual's access to housing and other social and health services by providing transportation to appointments and assistance in completion of documentation and paperwork.
- Work in a culturally sensitive manner, taking into consideration the unique needs of distinct populations (e.g., Aboriginal, transgendered, etc.).
- Provide harm reduction supplies, where necessary.
- Where possible, provide direct referral to community health and social support services.
- Maintains records of completed assessments and documents successes in assisting individuals in their accessing of services and completes reports on gaps in services.
- Compiles case example reports that highlight gaps in housing, social, health and community services required to address unmet needs and presents reasons and rationales that individuals provide for any resistance they have to accessing needed supports.
- Makes recommendations with respect to service changes or additional services required to address current unmet needs.
- Makes presentations and facilitates educational sessions that help educate and inform people of the challenges and barriers faced by those sleeping rough in Victoria.

Appendix D

Sheltering Solutions Workshop and Online Survey – Engagement Summary

Introduction

Victoria is a community that cares for its residents, and unfortunately, many in our community have nowhere to take shelter at night.

On September 16, 2015 the City hosted the hands-on *Sheltering Solutions Workshop* at the Crystal Garden to identify potential solutions for temporary housing. More than 400 people participated, many of whom were without homes, to share their ideas.

This was the first time and a unique opportunity for the City to consult one-on-one with members of the homeless community. To encourage participation, people without homes were provided an honourarium of \$20. Although some participants left after mid-way, two-thirds remained and worked in groups until the end of the workshop.

Participants were provided with eight key topics that members of the community had submitted over the summer months, but could also suggest their own ideas for discussion at each table. These suggestions served as a starting point for discussion at the workshop, where participants broke out into facilitated groups to brainstorm and share ideas. Input was collected by way of worksheets as well as on flip charts.

A corresponding online survey was launched the same day of the workshop, and was available for two-and-a-half weeks, providing the community an opportunity to share their ideas on potential sheltering solutions. 340 respondents participated in the online survey but were not required to answer every question. The survey closed on October 2 and results are available in the Appendices.

The workshop and online survey were promoted on the City's website (www.victoria.ca/sheltering) and associated Have Your Say portal, media release, social media channels (Twitter and Facebook), and by email to close to 500 stakeholders.

Additional public input was provided via email correspondence, and a presentation on how to reduce homelessness was submitted. There has also been some interest from members of the homeless community in the portable shelter that was displayed during the workshop by a participant.

While the City's social media posts were shared on Twitter and Facebook, ideas for potential solutions were not received on these channels. A social media summary is included in the Appendices.

Background

In the spring, the City of Victoria developed an action plan for addressing the needs of people without housing, and reducing impacts arising from sheltering activities in City parks. The action plan proposes that the City facilitate alternative temporary housing options, recognizing it will take several years to build an adequate supply of permanent housing.

Two temporary housing options the City has identified to date are designated temporary sheltering (tenting) areas in City parks, and a micro-housing village, which can include sleeping facilities such as huts and semi-permanent wooden structures on private or public land, with possible communal eating/gathering spaces.

Topaz Park was identified as a location that might be suitable for a tenting area. This option generated extensive community dialogue and concerns related to designated areas in parks, or specifically in Topaz Park. As a result, City Council passed a motion on August 5 directing staff to consult the public on options for all forms of sheltering before Council considers any proposal for a temporary designated tenting area in any park.

About the Sheltering Solutions Workshop

The *Sheltering Solutions Workshop* was two hours in length. Hosted by Mayor Lisa Helps, the first 20 minutes provided participants the opportunity to ask questions and share their concerns. The remainder of the workshop focused on facilitated discussions at each table.

All participants were provided with a Topic List of eight potential solutions for consideration that they could add new ideas to. Each group was then asked to determine **two topics** to "workshop" together. Next, each group spent 30 minutes discussing one topic, using the questions provided on the Worksheet. One person at each table was asked to serve as the "Recorder to complete the Worksheet on behalf of the group. After a short break, the second topic was workshopped for 30 minutes. Worksheets were submitted to the facilitator. Input was shared and recorded on flip charts by facilitators.

Note: As micro-housing is an initiative of the City's Housing Action, it was not included in the Topic List for discussion.

All input was gathered and summarized in the enclosed Appendix, "Sheltering Solutions Workshop Summary". A copy of the Topic Sheet and Worksheet are also included.

Topics List

Below is the list of eight topics that were provided to kick-start discussion. These topics were based on the input community members submitted over the summer.

1. A sheltering in vehicles (e.g. cars, vans, RVs, etc.) program with support services.*
2. A program for residents/local groups to provide shelter in their homes or buildings.
3. Fund additional beds at existing shelters.
4. Funding to make existing buildings into temporary shelters (e.g. vacant motels, City facilities, provincial government facilities, etc.).
5. Funding to create new shelters or temporary housing facilities.
6. Supervised sheltering sites on private or public land (not in a City park) with support services.*
7. One supervised sheltering site in one City park with support services.*
8. Supervised sheltering site in more than one City park with support services.*

*Support services could include for example, supervisors, an Island Health representative, washrooms, showers, comfort stations, garbage and sharps bins, etc.

Worksheet

The Worksheet was a helpful tool to guide conversation about each group's two topics. The Worksheet asked the following questions:

1. Why does your group think this is a good solution (rationale)? What are the pros and cons?
2. What next five steps should the City take to implement this solution?
3. Which organizations, if any, should the City collaborate and partner with to implement the solution?
4. Is there anything else you would like the City to consider about this proposed solution?

What We Heard at the Workshop

In reviewing the input collected at the workshop, there were significant support and ideas shared for the following three topic ideas:

Funding to make existing building into temporary shelters (e.g. vacant motels, City facilities, provincial government facilities, etc.)

This topic by far garnered the most ideas and feedback. Some ideas for this topic are noted below. For more information, please see the Appendix.

- Vic Plaza Hotel's common room.
- Mt. Saint Edwards – used to be a care home
- Housing in the Armory at night, out by 7 a.m.
- Using a vacant building shouldn't be a temporary solution. Could be permanent solution.
- Creates jobs for unemployed
- Use manpower of people housed to fix up the building and co-create the space
- Builds community and provides an address
- People want a room of their own and privacy
- Provide 24-hour storage lockers
- Look for smaller building
- Empty schools
- Trained staff important
- Pilot demonstration project
- Affordable; look for and secure funding
- Create a code of conduct

Funding to create new shelters or temporary housing facilities.

- Fewer people on the street
- Security
- Health
- Provides a home to live in that is affordable
- Housing needs to be developed in conjunction with key support services and amenities
- Needs to be open to everyone
- Needs good managers recruited
- Develop temporary housing that allows users to stay at least 1 – 3 weeks, not just nightly.
Need more stability
- Make it a real home for people, not just a place to sleep

Supervised sheltering sites on private or public land (not in a City park) with support services.

- Support/transition services are necessary to help people who need and want help
- Need a low barrier option – easiest on private/public vacant land
- Parks are overloaded with users – putting more sheltering there impacts them even more
- Good short-term solution but needs to be supervised.

Other Potential Solutions

Other potential solutions that were shared included:

- Rent subsidies, welfare reform, more rent supplements
- Instead of housing being the first step, focus on more and different support services
- Create an event to help raise money
- Need an accessible and affordable treatment centre on Vancouver island
- Reference to Vancouver's three tier system "out of the rain"
- Supervised safe injection site at lower parkade at corner of Pandora and Blanshard building
- Suspend penalties for camping beyond allowed times for now.
- Floating subsidies to offset cost of housing
- Combine multiple solutions such as public and private land, micro-housing, tents and vehicles

Please see the Appendix for more details and the suggested organizations at the workshop that the City could consider partnering with to achieve temporary housing solutions.

Who We Heard From the Online Survey

Which neighbourhood do you live in? Of 341 respondents:

Hillside Quadra	36.1%
Fairfield	12.0%
Outside of City of Victoria	10.9%
Fernwood	7.9%
James Bay	6.2%
Victoria West	5%
Burnside Gorge	4.4%
Downtown	3.8%
North or South Jubilee	3.5%
Oaklands	2.9%
Gonzales	2.1%
North Park	2.1%
Harris Green	1.8%
Rockland	1.5%

Gender: Of 340 respondents:

Male	38%
Female	62.1%
Other/prefer not to say	4.1%

What is your age? Of 337 respondents:

Age:

40 – 59	40.4%
25 – 39	35%
60 years or older	21.7%
18 – 24	2.1%
Under 18	0.9%

The online survey provided the same eight topics that were presented to workshop participants for input. Respondents were asked to select the top TWO solutions that most appealed to them.

Of the 224 respondents, the top three topic areas in the online survey were the same as those selected by the workshop participants.

Funding to make existing buildings into temporary shelters (e.g. vacant motels, City facilities, provincial government facilities, etc.).	76.8%
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Fund additional beds at existing shelters.	49.6%
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Funding to create new shelters or temporary housing facilities.	29.5%
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Supervised sheltering sites on private or public land (not in a City park) with support services.*	17.9%
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A program for residents/local groups to provide shelter in their homes or buildings.	8.5%
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A sheltering in vehicles (e.g. cars, vans, RVs, etc.) program with support services.*	4.0%
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Supervised sheltering site in more than one City park with support services.*	3.1%
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One supervised sheltering site in one City park with support services.*	2.2%
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Respondents were also given the opportunity to offer different solutions than the eight provided in the topic list. Of the 83 respondents, some of the ideas included:

- Central care home which is empty
- Seattle's group of monitored homeless move sites every three months.
- Is the City's motel fully utilized?
- Has anyone asked the homeless what they would like instead of City/agencies planning something that is not suitable or desired?
- A PPP is better. A managed camp with facilities on City property
- Pet-friendly
- City parking garage
- Churches – some have huge land ownings
- Fund a mental health and addiction centre
- Rent out existing motels
- Decommissioned Navy supply ship or an old cruise ship
- Wilsons food warehouse
- Return those who are from out-of-province
- Make existing shelters and support groups more accountable and audited for "value of service"
- Don't borrow money from CRD

- Invest in microhousing project
- Integrate shelter in new developments
- Look at Saskatoon model – forget temporary housing and get permanent housing
- Provincial responsibility not a municipal responsibility. Seek funding through provincial government
- Give significant property tax reduction to condo building that make one unit out of 12 available to the City
- Need more mental health housing and detox facilities
- Need support services under same roof as temporary housing
- Partnership program with Woodwynn Farms
- More assistance for youth on the street
- Bus/transit service a must for temporary housing locations
- Bunk beds in large facility
- Non-permanent is not a solution
- Small portable shelter pop-up tent
- Lobby harder for federal affordable housing programs
- Access empty homes owned by financial institutions
- Supervised "wet house" facilities
- Safe injection sites – mobile injection sites
- Tiny homes

Additional details regarding participants' responses and the full list of suggested organizations the City should consider partnering with, can be found in the Online Survey Results section of the Appendix.

Below are some of the suggested partnering organizations:

- Woodwynn Farm
- Ministry of Housing
- Island Health
- United Way
- WIN
- Victoria Cool Aid Society
- Camosun College Student Society
- University of Victoria Student Society
- Existing social service providers
- Our Place
- Faith groups/Churches
- Federal government
- Provincial government
- Other municipalities
- Red Cross
- Existing shelter operators
- YMCA
- Victoria Foundation
- Police
- Habitat for Humanity

Appendices

- Sheltering Solutions Workshop Summary
 - Topics List
 - Worksheet
- Sheltering Solution Online Survey Results
- Email and Correspondence
 - Presentation: Housing the Homeless Permanently
- Social Media Summary

- Media Release
- Media Coverage
- Website Content
- Stakeholder Email