



Background

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 Action Plan initiatives

This report provides an update on these and other initiatives related to addressing homelessness in the City.

Direction is also sought from Council on two operational initiatives detailed in the Action Plan related to:

- Storage Project for People's Belongings
- Social Service Outreach Pilot Project

Storage Project

City staff have been working with downtown service providers to facilitate development of a storage facility

- A proposed Terms of Reference has been developed modelled after a facility operating near downtown Vancouver
- Aim to provide a safe and secure location to store the belongings of people who are homeless
- No specific proposals have been developed due to challenges related to the securing of specific sites and funding constraints

Council previously authorized \$45,000 in funding

- Annual operating costs expected to closer to \$90,000
- Initial capital funding also required, expected to be \$45,000

It is recommended that the City increase the potential funding available and stimulate interest in the service through a competitive procurement process



Social Service Outreach Pilot Project

The proposed outreach services aims to provide early and ongoing contact with people sheltering in City parks

- Assess the housing and service needs of these individuals and connect them with services
- Designed to augment and fill gaps in services currently offered by Island Health, VicPD, etc.

Victoria Cool-Aid Society has agreed to be the City's primary partner in delivering the outreach services overseen and coordinated via a steering committee (the City, VicPD, Island Health, BC Housing and downtown service providers)

\$35,000 was approved in the *Action Plan* to be combined with funding from a project partner

- Partner agencies prepared to offer some in-kind support, but none have funding available to allocate to this project
- Current funding sufficient for a period of up to six months – not recommended

Staff recommend Council consider increasing the available funding up to \$80,000 to enable the pilot project to operate for one full year



Sheltering in Parks

In late July, the City postponed plans to implement a designated sheltering site within Topaz Park and committed to additional engagement on future sheltering actions

In September a *Sheltering Solutions Workshop* was held with approximately 400 people in attendance. Three-quarters of the participants indicated that they were facing issues related to homelessness, and provided important insight into the options being discussed

The top three solutions chosen and discussed by workshop participants were:

- Funding to make existing building into temporary shelters
- 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, 340 respondents participated. The top three most-frequently ranked solutions were:

- | | |
|---|-------|
| • Funding to make existing buildings into temporary shelters. | 76.8% |
| • Fund additional beds at existing shelters. | 49.6% |
| • Funding to create new shelters or temporary housing facilities. | 29.5% |



Other Updates

Additional Shelter Spaces

- While previously requested funding for adult and youth summer shelter spaces was not approved, BC Housing recently provided funding to Our Place for an additional 40 temporary adult shelter spaces for the winter months
- These beds were made available as of October 15, 2015

Micro-Housing

- At the October 1, 2015 Council meeting, Council approved a \$25,000 grant to assist the Micro-Housing Victoria Society in their initial stages of project development
- Since then, MHVS has been undertaking consultation, design development and site scouting

New Housing Units

- 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 at 3211 – 3223 Quadra Street in Saanich
- This affordable housing project is expected to increase vacancies in the supportive and emergency housing supply, as people transition to more stable forms of housing



Next Steps

The management and support for homelessness and sheltering services is not a primary service of the City of Victoria therefore staff have sought advisory services to:

- Support a discussion with City Council on the role the City should take to address homelessness
- 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

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.



Recommendation

That Council:

Receive the November 19, 2015 *Status Report- Action Plan for Housing, Supports and City Services for Sheltering in City Parks*; and

Approve the following *Action Plan* recommendations:

Storage Project for People's Belongings

- 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
- 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.

Social Service Outreach Pilot Project

- 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
- 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.

That Council direct staff to report back to Council at the February 18, 2016 Governance and Priorities Committee meeting.

