

City of Victoria



Sheltering in Parks

The City of Victoria recently 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 alternatives the City identified were 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. Micro-housing is not envisioned for Victoria parks.

Learn more about the Action Plan for Housing Supports and City Services for Sheltering in Parks and the City's 2015 operational initiatives to manage sheltering in Victoria parks.

Sheltering Solutions Workshop

Wednesday, September 16, 2015

6:30 p.m – 8:30 p.m.

Crystal Garden, 713 Douglas Street

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

Let's talk about options.

On Wednesday, September 16, from 6:30pm – 8:30 pm, a hands-on workshop will be held at the Crystal Garden. Doors open at 6 p.m. The community is invited to share ideas and help identify considerations and potential solutions to providing temporary housing options to those without homes.

Please come and share your ideas.

Free parking is available on-street and at the Broughton Street Parkade, located below the Central Library.

Complimentary childcare will be provided for children four and up. Participants are asked to keep infants and younger children with them.

Coffee, tea and treats will be served.

Online Survey

The community is invited to share their ideas on potential temporary housing solutions by completing an online survey. The survey will be open until October 2, 2015.

Input from the workshop and survey will be provided to City staff for review and evaluation, and will inform a report to Council on how best to move forward with providing temporary housing options for those in our community without shelter.

About Sheltering in Victoria Parks

Each year, as the weather warms there is an increase in people using City parks for overnight shelter. It is important that the parks are safe and accessible for all users so a proactive and responsive approach is taken by City staff to manage the various uses and safety of the parks for all users.

From June until the end of August, when parks are busiest, proactive parks patrols are conducted Monday to Saturday between 7 a.m. and 3:30 p.m.

The Parks Regulation Bylaw is in place to balance the uses within the park and ensure parks activities are safe for all users and the environment and amenities are protected from damage. The bylaw regulates matters such fires in parks, alcohol use, damage or nuisance, as well as the use of City parks as a place of overnight shelter for homeless persons.

Rules for Temporary Overnight Shelter in Victoria Parks

Victoria parks are not designed for recreational camping, and camping is not permitted. **Only if a shelter bed is not available**, can those who are homeless seek temporary overnight shelter in a city park.

Some rules to follow when seeking overnight shelter in a Victoria park are:

- Overnight shelter must be temporary (e.g., tent, or other shelter constructed from a tarp, plastic, cardboard) and can only be erected from 8 p.m. – 7 a.m. from March to October (7 p.m. – 7 a.m. from November to February). Tents and property cannot be left behind after 7 a.m. Valuable items may be impounded for collection by the owner, and garbage may be disposed of.
- A temporary shelter is not permitted on, or near, any paths, playgrounds, sports fields, flower beds, long grass, in an area that is being used for an event, a cemetery or anywhere that is considered environmentally sensitive.
- The following areas are off limits at all times for erecting overnight shelters: Ross Bay Cemetery, Pioneer Square, Bastion Square, Centennial Square, Franklin Green Park, Moss Rock Park, or any median or boulevard in Victoria.
- Open flame (e.g., lighter, camp fire, candle) and smoking are not permitted.

To inquire about impounded items, please call the City of Victoria Bylaw Office at 250.361.0215 or visit 625 Pandora Avenue, Monday to Friday from 8 a.m. – 4 p.m.

Park Washrooms

Below are three Victoria parks that have extended washroom hours until the end of October.

Beacon Hill Park

The main washrooms located in the centre of the park off Arbutus Way are open Monday to Sunday from 6 a.m. - 2:30 a.m.

Topaz Park

The main washrooms next to the sport fields are open Monday to Sunday from 6 a.m. – 10 p.m. The two portable washrooms located near the tennis courts are open Monday to Sunday from 9:30 p.m. – 6 a.m.

Stadacona Park

The main washrooms adjacent to the tennis courts are open Monday to Sunday from 6 a.m. - 2:30 a.m.

Helpful Information

This fact sheet [PDF - 42 KB] outlines the rules for seeking temporary overnight shelter in city parks and provides a list of shelters and affordable housing contacts.

Contact Us

Should a member of the public be concerned about an activity in a park, they can contact the City of Victoria Parks Office at 250.361.0600 or the City of Victoria Bylaw Office at 250.361.0215 or bylawenforcement@victoria.ca

Although the City of Victoria tries to ensure the accuracy of all information here, you should confirm all information.

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Sheltering in Parks

Share Your Ideas on Temporary Housing Solutions

Victoria is a community that cares for its residents. Unfortunately, many residents in our community lack consistent housing, and as a result, an estimated 130 people sought shelter in City parks this past summer.

The City is seeking ideas from the community on temporary housing solutions that can be implemented as soon as possible, and no later than spring 2016.

Thank you to everyone who participated in the Sheltering Solutions Workshop on September 16 at the Crystal Garden. Hundreds of people shared their stories and ideas on how to provide temporary housing for those without shelter.

Those who were unable to attend the workshop have the opportunity to share their ideas in an online survey.

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Online Survey: Share Your Ideas on Temporary Housing Solutions by October 2

October 1, 2015

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Michelle Harris

Subject: Sheltering Solutions Workshop, City of Victoria

From: Citizen Engagement

Sent: Thursday, Sep 10, 2015 10:15 AM

To: Undisclosed Recipients (engage@victoria.ca)

Subject: Sheltering Solutions Workshop, City of Victoria

The communication below is being resent due to feedback that it was caught in some spam filters. Please share with members and post on listserves.

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For more information, visit: www.victoria.ca