



**Council Member Motion
For the Council Meeting of November 26, 2015**

Date: November 24, 2015

From: Councillors Isitt and Loveday

Subject: Housing Options for People Sheltering Outdoors

Background:

People who are homeless are currently sheltering in the greenspace adjacent to the Victoria Courthouse at 850 Burdett Avenue, as well as parks, doorways and other public spaces throughout the City and region.

The Provincial government has indicated a reluctance to displace the people sheltering adjacent to the Courthouse, a position consistent with the conclusion of the BC Supreme Court in the case of *Abbotsford (City) v. Shantz*, 2015 BCSC 1909 that “constant movement of the homeless exacerbated their already vulnerable positions, as it inhibited the ability of the service providers who endeavoured to help the City’s homeless to actually locate them and provide help. I thus find that the evidence supports a finding that the Impugned Bylaws have had a serious effect on the psychological or physical integrity of the City’s homeless.” (para 209)

Victoria Council has identified the strategic objectives of Social Inclusion and Affordable Housing, and approved approximately \$300,000 for supports relating to people sheltering outdoors. City Council has also endorsed the Regional Housing First Strategy, proposing joint action by the municipal, provincial and federal governments to provide housing with supports for people currently sheltering outdoors, as the first step in an integrated approach to homelessness, mental health, addictions and wellness.

It is therefore proposed that the City request a meeting with the Province to discuss the immediate provision of a sufficient supply of rent supplements for the people currently in the greenspace adjacent to the Victoria Courthouse, while also directing staff to engage social service partners, private landowners, and the Provincial government and report back on options for the repurposing, lease or acquisition of facilities for housing with supports, for people currently sheltering outdoors who require a higher level of supports than those available through the rent supplement program.

Recommendation:

THAT Council:

- (1) Request that the Mayor request a meeting with the provincial Minister responsible for housing without delay, to discuss the immediate provision of a sufficient supply of rent supplements for the people currently sheltering in the greenspace adjacent to the Victoria Courthouse at 850 Burdett Avenue;
- (2) Direct staff to engage social service partners, private land owners and the Provincial government and report back on an emergency basis on options for the repurposing, lease or acquisition of facilities for housing with supports, for people currently sheltering outdoors who require a higher level of supports than those available through the rent supplement program.

Respectfully submitted,



Councillor Isitt



Councillor Loveday