

THE CORPORATION OF THE
CITY OF WHITE ROCK
CORPORATE REPORT



DATE: June 10, 2024

TO: Mayor and Council

FROM: Anne Berry, Director, Planning & Development Services

SUBJECT: 2023 – 2024 Daytime Warming Centre Summary Report

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council receive the report dated June 10, 2024, from the Director of Planning & Development Services, titled “2023-2024 Daytime Warming Centre Summary Report,” for information.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report summarizes the operational period of the City’s Emergency Daytime Warming Centre for the 2023-2024 winter season.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

Motion # & Meeting Date	Motion Details
November 6, 2023 2023-433	<p>THAT Council:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Direct staff to send correspondence to the City of Surrey requesting 50% of the cost to operate a daytime warming center from November 20th 2023 to March 15th 2024, with the expected share from Surrey being approximately \$180,000; and 2. Direct staff to rent and locate the warming center trailer at Centennial Park at the parking lot at Vine Avenue and Anderson Street; and 3. Direct staff to engage and direct the awarding of the provision of warming center services to Engaged Communities Canada Society; 4. Staff to receive any donations provided from the public as deferred revenue and that funds received be allocated to the warming center; and 5. Approve the costs to be funded from 2023 surplus for operation from November 20th to December 31st, 2023 and pre-approve funds from taxation for the 2024 5-Year Financial Plan to cover operation from January 1 to March 15th, 2024, for a total cost of up to \$360,000

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

The purpose of this report is to provide Council with a debrief following the winter 2023-2024 operations of the City's Emergency Daytime Warming Centre (the Centre). The Centre operated from November 27, 2023, to March 15, 2024.

On November 6, 2023, Council authorized the awarding of a contract for services to Engaged Communities Canada Society (the Operator) for the operation of a temporary emergency daytime warming shelter (the Centre) (intended for those experiencing homelessness) during the period of November 20, 2023, to March 15, 2024. On November 27, 2023, the Centre began its operations at Centennial Park for the winter 2023/2024 season, operating daily from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. This year the centre was relocated to the parking area immediately south of the tennis courts adjacent to the community garden. This was done to avoid conflict with space needed for planned work anticipated for the replacement of the batting cage. In order to better contain the warming centre activities the site was fenced for the duration of the operation.

Generally, the Centre operated as expected, and served a regular population with limited impact to other park and facility users. On occasion a Centre guest would find their way into one of the open city buildings on site, or into the surrounding park, however the Operator was always available to assist, and recreation management staff were able to reach the Operator directly whenever necessary.

Overall, the Centre experienced daily activity, often operating at capacity over the course of the day. A total of 3845 visits were recorded, with several days experiencing full capacity at any one time. Services offered by the Operator included light meals and snacks, bathroom facilities, addressing basic medical needs, family reunifications, connections to health and social service providers, and improved mental and physical well-being for Centre guests. Further details are provided in Appendix A, the Project Summary Report prepared by Engaged Communities Canada Society.

With the exception of minor service calls to ATCO, no significant repairs were needed to either the City or ATCO facilities this operating season.

The City did not receive a significant number of complaints to Bylaw Enforcement over the course of the operation of the Centre; however, a small number of complaints were submitted regarding evidence of camping, drug paraphernalia, and on one occasion human waste in the playground. Bylaw Enforcement staff stepped up patrols of the area and worked to discourage the set-up of any camps in the park. The RCMP also increased their presence in the area during this period, which helped to support Bylaws efforts. The washrooms at Generations Playground were closed to the public for the duration of the operation to discourage opportunities for overnight shelter in these facilities.

Next Steps

In preparation for the winter 2024/25 season, staff are actively looking for alternative sites for the daytime warming centre. Work is also underway to develop a Request for Proposals for operators for the upcoming season, in keeping with the City's Procurement Policy, to be presented for Council consideration at an upcoming meeting.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The total budget allocated for the winter 2023-2024 season was \$360,000. The operation of the Centre is generally on budget, at \$367,934. The City was unsuccessful in its request for cost sharing with the City of Surrey.

Staff also learned that the City may be eligible for cost recovery through the Ministry of Emergency Management and Climate Readiness for two periods of time when Environment Canada issued an extreme weather alert. To date, \$16,485 has been approved by the Ministry, and staff continue to work with the Ministry for another \$58,995.

Further, monetary donations were also received from the community in support of centre operations, totaling \$16,270.

COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

In previous years, the White Rock South Surrey Baseball Association have shared their concerns regarding the location of the site, particularly with the anticipated construction of a new year round indoor batting cage facility at the same location. This year, while the location did not impact baseball activities, staff did hear concerns expressed from representatives of the Semiahmoo Minor Lacrosse Association regarding the interface of Centre guests with the lacrosse box at the park.

Recognizing that community concerns indicate that the Centennial Park location is not ideally suited to the operation of a daytime warming center on an on-going basis, staff will continue to investigate other location opportunities for the 2024/2025 season.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL INVOLVEMENT/IMPLICATIONS

In addition to various divisions in Planning & Development Services, Financial Services, Engineering and Operations, and the Recreation and Culture Departments are also involved in the operation of the Centre. Engineering and Operations assisted with setting up the power source and fencing for the site and with the coordination of the facility set up and take down. Recreation and Culture staff were onsite contacts for deliveries and removal of the structures, as well as monitoring of the area and as a contact for site concerns. Bylaw Enforcement staff and RCMP also proactively monitored the area.

ALIGNMENT WITH STRATEGIC PRIORITIES

The operation of the 2023 - 2024 Emergency Daytime Warming Centre is in alignment with the following strategic priority of Council:

Plan for adverse weather impacts to protect community safety:

- Assess future location, annually seek to secure grant funding, and continue to partner with the City of Surrey to operate the Warming Centre each winter from November – March

OPTIONS / RISKS / ALTERNATIVES

The following options are available for Council's consideration:

1. Direct staff to report back with additional information as requested by Council.

CONCLUSION

This report is to provide Council with a debrief following the winter 2023-2024 operations of the City's Emergency Daytime Warming Centre.

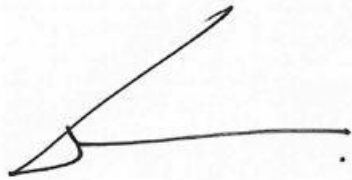
Respectfully submitted,

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Anne Berry
Director, Planning and Development Services

Comments from the Chief Administrative Officer

This report is provided for Council's information.

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Guillermo Ferrero
Chief Administrative Officer