

THE CORPORATION OF THE
CITY OF WHITE ROCK
CORPORATE REPORT



DATE: January 24, 2022
TO: Mayor and Council
FROM: Eric Stepura, Director, Recreation and Culture
SUBJECT: Daytime Warming Shelters

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approve funding in the amount of \$160,000 to operate a daytime warming shelter in a modular office trailer to be located in the parking lot located adjacent to the baseball concession/washroom facility at Centennial Park from January 28, 2022 to March 15, 2022. As 50% (or \$80,000) of this funding will be provided by the City of Surrey, the City's portion will be up to \$80,000. Funding for this service is not identified in the City's 2022 operating budget, therefore, approval of this project would require a further tax increase of .32% in 2022.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

In late December 2021, Council received letters from local citizens and the Homelessness Association of BC asking Council to setup a warming shelter for people experiencing homelessness in the South Surrey/White Rock area, especially due to the extreme cold weather forecasted to occur in this region over the Christmas holidays.

At the January 10, 2022 regular Council meeting, staff provided a corporate, titled "Options for a Warming Shelter" in response to Council's request that the City provide a warming shelter for local people experiencing homelessness.

Following discussion, Council directed staff to conduct further research on daytime warming shelter options in White Rock and bring back one (1) or more location(s) suitable for use as a daytime extreme weather warming shelter for Council's consideration at their January 24, 2022 regular Council meeting. Council also directed staff to reach out to the City of Surrey on this matter. This corporate is in response to this request.

PREVIOUS COUNCIL DIRECTION

At the January 10, 2022, regular Council meeting, Council approved the following motions regarding a staff report from the Director of Recreation and Culture, titled "Options for a Warming Shelter:"

Motion # & Meeting Date	Motion Details
2022-010 January 10, 2022	THAT Council direct the following: 1. Between now and Jan 24, 2022 (next scheduled regular Council meeting) that the Mayor and staff identify one (1) or more location(s) to be used as day time extreme weather

	<p>warming shelter whereby the city would cover the cost and the staff to run it (including partnerships with other agencies); and further</p> <p>2. That the Mayor and staff connect again with the City of Surrey on this matter.</p>
--	---

Motion # & Meeting Date	Motion Details
2022-011 January 10, 2022	THAT Council receive the corporate report dated January 10, 2022, from the Director of Recreation and Culture, titled “Temporary Warming Shelter Options”.

INTRODUCTION/BACKGROUND

At the January 10, 2022 regular Council meeting, staff provided a corporate, titled “Options for a Warming Shelter” in response to Council’s request that the City provide a warming shelter for local people experiencing homelessness. Staff had provided three options (including estimated costs) for Council’s consideration related to providing warming shelters in the City of White Rock for local people experiencing homelessness, and a fourth option which was to for the City to provide warming shelter services once funding from other government or charitable sources can be secured.

All four options presented in the corporate report were not supported by Council, and staff were directed to do further research on warming shelter options and identify one or more recommended location(s) to be used as a daytime extreme weather shelter.

This corporate report will provide an update on the further research that has been done to identify a suitable location(s) for a daytime warming shelter; recommend a warming facility option; and provide some background information on three daytime warming shelters operated during the recent cold weather period in Courtney, Gibsons, and Cowichan Valley Regional District.

Warming Shelter Locations Considered but Not Recommended

In two previous reports to Council (March 8, 2021 and January 10, 2022) on warming shelter options, several civic facilities have been considered, but are not recommended due to anticipated negative impacts that a warming shelter at these locations may cause, such as safety and increased crime concerns of adjacent residents and businesses, complaints from regular facility users, renters and tenants due to cancelling City programs and services, and safety concerns associated with mixing regular facility users with people experiencing homelessness. The civic facilities in White Rock that have previously been considered and rejected are:

- White Rock Community Centre
- Centennial Arena Hall
- Centre for Active Living
- Kent Street Activity Centre Auditorium
- City Hall
- City Hall Annex
- City Operations Yard
- A tent on the corner of Johnston Road and Russell Avenue
- A tent in the Centennial Park parking lot

Since the January 10, 2022 Council meeting, staff have researched some additional civic facilities to find a suitable facility for a daytime warming shelter. This research is as follows which includes staff recommendations:

Mann Park Lawn Bowling Clubhouse

- Not recommended as this City owned building is leased to the Mann Park Lawn Bowling Club and is being used throughout the winter months for indoor carpet bowling and for a Montessori School.

White Rock Lawn Bowling Clubhouse

- Not recommended as this City owned building is leased to the White Rock Lawn Bowling Club and is being used by members for Club activities throughout the winter months whenever their artificial turf green is usable.

Pop Uptown Gallery

- Not recommended as this art gallery space which the City leases from the Landmark Group is booked for monthly art exhibits by local artists between now and Fall 2022. Cancelling these art shows to repurpose the space for a daytime warming shelter would greatly upset members of the local art community. The property management company for the Landmark Group expressed concern about the impact of having more homeless people loitering around the stores in Central Plaza.

Peninsula Productions Black Box Theatre

- Not recommended as this City owned facility is leased to Peninsula Production for use as a rehearsal and performance space for providing theatre arts productions and concerts in the community. Cancelling these shows and reallocating the space for a daytime warming shelter would greatly upset members of our local art community.

In addition, the Mayor and a member of Council have reached out and contacted several members of local faith based agencies to ask if they have facilities available that could be used to accommodate a daytime warming shelter during periods of extreme weather for people experiencing homelessness. To date, none of the local church groups have offered indoor facilities to address this need for the current winter season.

Recommended Daytime Warming Shelter Location

Staff recommend renting and installing a 12' x 60' modular office trailer to be located in the parking lot adjacent to the baseball diamond concession/washroom building at Centennial Park from January 28, 2022 to March 15, 2022.

Facility Costs

The cost for rental and hookup of a modular trailer, with added washroom cleaning is as follows:

• rental, delivery, setup, takedown, and taxes	\$ 6,500
• power hookup, power cable and BC Hydro permit fee	\$ 2,500
• Loss of pay parking revenue	\$ 500
• Extra daily janitorial cleaning of washrooms at Centennial Park	<u>\$ 8,500</u>
Total installation/rental/cleaning cost	<u>\$18,000</u>

Warming Shelter Operating Costs

Staff have received a quote of \$3,000/day from the Engaged Communities of Canada Society (ECCS) for operating a warming shelter for up to 30 people experiencing homelessness in South Surrey and White Rock during the hours of 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. daily. ECCS is available to start operating a warming shelter once a suitable facility is identified and available for use. ECCS

would need at least four (4) days of notice to mobilize their team to operate a warming shelter and would need commitments of a minimum of seven (7) days for each deployment. If space were identified and staff were able to provide four (4) days of notice in anticipation of inclement weather, delivering services for one week would equate to a staffing cost of \$21,000 weekly for 30 people in need.

For budget purposes, due to the need to provide four (4) days of advance notice for a minimum seven (7) day commitment, staff are providing an option for consideration for providing services for a block of time (January 28 to March 15, 2022). Therefore, the estimated operating cost for the warming shelter from January 28 to March 15, 2022 is estimated at \$142,000 based on serving 30 people per day. These operating costs would likely be less if the warming shelter is only opened during periods of minus zero degree weather, however, these services may be difficult to deliver sporadically as inclement weather can be hard to predict.

The total combined facility costs and operating costs, to provide and operate a warming shelter for local people experiencing homelessness from January 28, 2022 to March 15, 2022 is estimated at \$160,000 for up to 30 people. Again, these costs would be less if the centre is only opened as needed during periods of minus zero degree weather.

Discussions with the City of Surrey

City staff have had conversations with staff at the City of Surrey, and they have indicated that their Council have also been asked by the same group of church volunteers to provide a daytime warming shelter for South Surrey and White Rock people experiencing homelessness.

Surrey staff have also conducted a review of facility options for a shelter in South Surrey, and to date have not found a suitable location.

Surrey did indicate that they are prepared to contribute 50% towards the cost of installing and operating a warming shelter in White Rock or South Surrey, once a suitable location can be found.

White Rock RCMP Report on Homelessness in White Rock

On April 16 and 17, 2021 the White Rock RCMP conducted a point-in-time count of unsheltered people experiencing homelessness in the City. This count did not include individuals living in shelters, transitions houses, safe houses, or temporarily in other people's homes. With their knowledge of the many secluded spots in White Rock, they went into bushes, parks, around condos, vacant buildings, in parkades, alleys, and around businesses. They located four (4) individuals during these patrols. As point-in-time counts have limitations, the officers at the detachment were also canvassed regarding their encounters with people experiencing homelessness over the previous two months in White Rock. Twenty four (24) individuals in total were identified as being unsheltered. Many of the officers have developed a rapport with these individuals, allowing for candid sharing of their experiences.

On January 10, 2022, Kale Pauls, Detachment Commander for the White Rock RCMP reported that the current number of people experiencing homelessness in White Rock fluctuates between two and six individuals. A couple of the people they encounter in White Rock will likely not go to a warming shelter. Much of the local need for people experiencing homelessness is primarily located with the area along 152 Street between 16th Avenue and 24th Avenue in South Surrey where the fast food restaurants and coffee shops allow these individuals to stay for a while in their establishment to keep warm.

Other BC Daytime Warming Shelters

At the January 10, 2022 regular Council meeting, a volunteer at Peninsula United Church addressed Council to plea for Council to provide a daytime warming shelter for the homeless in White Rock. The Peninsula United Church volunteers mobilized to operate a daytime warming shelter at their church from December 28, 2021 to January 3, 2022.

In her presentation, the volunteer stated that during the recent cold weather over the holidays, the BC communities of Gibsons, Courtney and Cowichan Valley operated daytime warming shelters provided by their local government. Staff have contacted these communities to learn what they did to help their homeless individuals, how they funded it, and what their experience was. The findings are as follows:

Town of Gibsons

Staff spoke with the CAO for the Town of Gibsons, and the Homeless Consultant, about their warming shelter experience. Their comments were as follows:

Through “Everybody Needs a Home” Gibsons Program, the Town of Gibsons opened a daytime warming shelter for up to 12 people at the Marine Room located under their Town owned Arts Building in Gibsons every day for two weeks from December 24, 2022 to January 7, 2022. The Town provided the space including heat and light. The shelter was operated by a Homeless Coordinator consultant, with assistance from community volunteers and donations. The Town’s program also provided rides over this time period for homeless individuals and supportive housing residents needing to get back and forth from Gibsons to Sechelt to attend the overnight shelter operated by the Salvation Army in Sechelt, or to get medical attention.

The “Everybody Needs a Home” Gibsons project was funded by the Strengthening Communities’ Services funding grant program, administered by the Union of BC Municipalities (UBCM), for a year-long term for eligible expenses. It has three parts: support for the winter shelter, an outreach program and a de-stigmatization program. The Town of Gibsons has formed a partnership with the Canadian Mental Health Association to hire and fund a new outreach worker for the remaining duration of the Everybody Needs a Home program.

Municipal staff were not involved in providing direct contact with the people attending the warming shelter. That work was done by trained staff, and community volunteers.

Cowichan Valley Regional District (CVRD)

Staff spoke to staff at the CVRD. Their comments were:

The CVRD did provide the Cowichan Community Centre for a warming centre during the recent cold snap over the past holiday season, at the request of the Province and Island Health, but it was operated by the Red Cross, not CVRD staff. However, CVRD staff were on the front line at the facility trying to keep their regular recreation programs going, which meant attempting to keep their regular customers separated from the homeless people. CVRD staff experienced violent altercations, inappropriate conduct, high stress and disruption to their regular operations.

“We will work with Island Health to identify appropriate locations and service providers for when we need to activate cooling centres/warming centres for the vulnerable populations during future extreme weather events. The community and agencies always look to the CVRD as we own the community centre, but we need to draw a line as to what services are appropriate for a centre that serves a multitude of users.”

City of Courtney

Staff talked to staff at the City of Courtney. They provided the following information on their community programs for the homeless:

A daytime warming shelter called CONNECT, is operated by a not for profit society called Comox Valley Transitional Society in partnership with the Comox Valley Association to End Homelessness. CONNECT provides a safe, welcoming space for vulnerable individuals experiencing or at-risk of experiencing homelessness. It is a space where people can escape inclement weather, access bathrooms, enjoy light refreshments, access Wi-Fi and be connected to other support agencies. The goal of CONNECT is to help reduce homelessness by providing support and resources to individuals that may assist them in obtaining and maintaining housing. CONNECT is located at 685 Cliffe Avenue in Courtenay, and is open seven day a week from 10:00 a.m. to 5:00 p.m.

CONNECT is located in a facility purchased by the City of Courtney to store the City's archives. The building was repurposed in March 2020. The City rents the space to Comox Valley Transitional Society at a subsidized rate of \$1,000/ month, which is a 66% subsidy of its market value. Municipal staff are not involved in providing direct contact with, or services to the people attending the warming shelter. That work is done by trained staff and community volunteers. Funding to operate the CONNECT warming shelter for up to 60 people is provided by Comox Valley Regional District, the Comox Valley Community Foundation, BC Housing and various donors.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The City has not budgeted for the provision of a warming shelter for people experiencing homelessness.

If approved, funding in the amount of \$160,000 will be required to install and operate a daytime warming shelter in a modular office trailer to be located in the parking lot located adjacent to the baseball concession /washroom facility at Centennial Park from January 28, 2022 to March 15, 2022. The City of Surrey has agreed to fund 50% of this expense, therefore, the actual cost to the City of White Rock will be \$80,000. As funding for this service cost is not identified in the City's 2022 operating budget, approval of this project will require an additional tax increase of .32%.

City staff will explore funding from Provincial agencies such as BC Housing, UBCM and others to help fund this cost. No provincial grant funding for this service has been secured at this time.

COMMUNICATION AND COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT IMPLICATIONS

Residents, regular park user groups and businesses located near the site of a temporary shelter for local people experiencing homelessness should be notified before the shelter is operational.

INTERDEPARTMENTAL INVOLVEMENT/IMPLICATIONS

Engineering and Municipal Operations will need to approve and oversee the placement and utility hookup of a modular office trailer placed on City property, and will arrange for extra janitorial cleaning of the park washroom building located adjacent to the warming shelter.

The City's Fire Chief would have to establish the room capacity of the warming shelter trailer.

The City's Parking Services staff, under the Planning and Development Services Department, will need to be notified of this parking lot closure, as it will result in loss of some parking at Centennial Park.

Recreation and Culture staff will need to notify soccer and baseball field users that a portion of the parking lot adjacent to the soccer and baseball fields will be repurposed for use for a temporary warming shelter modular office trailer.

OPTIONS / RISKS / ALTERNATIVES

The following alternate option is available for Council's consideration.

Purchase rather than rent a modular office trailer for use as a daytime warming shelter for use as needed in the future. The price quote received for a 12' x 60' modular office trailer including purchase, delivery and setup and applicable taxes is \$62,500. Utility hookup cost (i.e. power, water and sewer) will be approximately another \$10,000 or more depending upon the site chosen. This option would require a total of \$225,000 in funding in 2022 of which \$72,500 would be needed from the City's 2022 Capital Asset Budget. If the remaining \$152,500 is split 50/50, with the City of Surrey, then the City's portion would be an estimated \$76,250, which would result in approximately a .31% increase in 2022 City property taxes.

This option is not recommended as the proposed site for the office trailer in the parking lot beside the baseball diamond concession/washroom building at Centennial Park should not be used during the months of April through October, as it would greatly interfere with annual scheduled baseball and soccer activities, and the planned construction of the new baseball training centre which will start work in the summer/fall of 2022.

CONCLUSION

Since February 2021, Council has received letters from members of some local faith based organizations asking White Rock City Council to take on the responsibility for providing a warming shelter for local people experiencing homelessness.

In late December 2021, Council received letters from local citizens and the Homelessness Association of BC asking Council to setup a warming shelter for people experiencing homelessness in the South Surrey/ White Rock area, especially due to the extreme cold weather forecasted to occur in this region over the past Holiday Season.

At the January 10, 2022 regular Council meeting, staff provided a corporate, titled "Options for a Warming Shelter" in response to Council's request that the City provide a warming shelter for local people experiencing homelessness. Staff had provided three options (including estimated costs) for Council's consideration related to providing warming shelters in the City of White Rock, and a fourth option, which was to for the City to provide warming shelter services once funding from other government or charitable sources can be secured.

All four options presented in the corporate report were rejected by Council, and the Mayor and staff were directed to do further research on warming shelter options and identify one or more recommended location(s) to be used as a daytime extreme weather shelter for Council's consideration at their January 24, 2022 regular Council meeting. Council also directed staff to reach out to the City of Surrey on this matter.

Since the January 10, 2022 Council Meeting, staff from both the City of White Rock and the City of Surrey have researched the possible use of civic facilities in White Rock and South Surrey in an effort to find a suitable facility for a daytime warming shelter. It has been

determined that none of the existing civic facilities in White Rock or South Surrey are available and/or suitable to be repurposed as a daytime warming shelter.

Staff recommend providing a temporary daytime warming shelter by renting and installing a 12' x 60' modular office trailer in the parking lot adjacent to the baseball diamond concession/washroom building at Centennial Park from January 28, 2022 to March 15, 2022 from 7:00 a.m. to 10:00 p.m. daily for up to 30 people is estimated at \$160,000 for up to 30 people. These costs would be shared by the City of White Rock and the City of Surrey, therefore, the City of White Rock's share of the cost to operate a daytime warming shelter in an office trailer located in Centennial Park between January 28, 2022 and March 15, 2022 is estimated at \$80,000. This cost will likely be less if the warming shelter is only opened as needed during periods of extreme cold weather.

The shelter would be operated by trained staff from a not for profit society (Engaged Community of Canada Society) who are experienced in working with people experiencing homelessness. ECCS is the agency that recently operated a warming shelter at Peninsula United Church for local area people experiencing homelessness. They are prepared to start operating the daytime warming shelter as early as January 28, 2022.

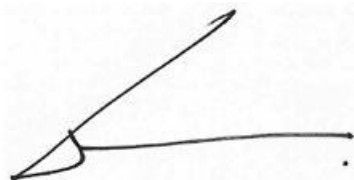
Respectfully submitted,



Eric Stepura
Director, Recreation and Culture

Comments from the Chief Administrative Officer

I concur with the recommendation of this corporate report.



Guillermo Ferrero
Chief Administrative Officer