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To: "Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"
CC: "City Manager's Correspondence Group - DL"
Date: 8/5/2020 10:21:34 AM
Subject: Navigation Centre Q&A

Hi Mayor and Council:

Further to questions from Council:

The Navigation Centre will actually be a BC Housing service (as are all shelters) but with additional wrap-around supports not offered in all traditional shelters.

- The 60-bed, 24/7 centre will be referral only and provide integrated clinical health supports, as well as culturally appropriate services for Indigenous peoples.
- Homelessness Services Outreach Services will be provided, including connection to income, mental health, primary care

The discussion on exactly what is going to be offered are not finalized, as there are still ongoing discussions between BC housing and VCH to finalize what the specific embedded health services may look like. The selected operator will also help finalize these discussions.

Traditionally what the City does is provide space and BC Housing brings the operating dollars and service oversight. Council will be asked to approve a nominal lease once a space has been found.

In terms of space for this type of service and time to deliver:

Our challenge remains that the spaces that can accommodate this type of work need renovations ☐ installation of showers, washrooms, laundry, often they have to be sprinklered, etc. Staff are likewise frustrated it has taken so long to find a space and very much understand the urgency – there have been a lot of challenges, but they are working diligently.

The issue with a built structure is we need vacant land for that and what vacant land we have we have prioritized for development of housing or for redevelopment that can generate revenue for the City (i.e, PEF) to support our operations. For a city like Vancouver where we can't grow out, we try to maximize our land. This is why for shelters – including the navigation centre – staff look for indoor spaces that couldn't be otherwise used for actual housing. In terms of speed, even temporary modular housing takes some time to construct and large sprung structures require significant foundational work and then occupy land that could be used to deliver permanent housing so even though the delivery time is 8 weeks, the time to get the site prep done is still significant – so we try to go for built structures and have discussed with BC Housing in the past the idea of even two story TM shelters.

That said, staff are also worried about finding a space that could work given the challenges they continue to face. Sandra and team are going to review other options over August and we'll keep Council updated on that work.

In terms of whether the Navigation Centre is the solution for Strathcona:

Please note that the number of spaces for the Navigation Centre would not be sufficient to deal with relocation of people sleeping outside in Strathcona – we still need more shelter capacity and – more importantly – more housing. But each of these takes time. We also have 100 units of TMH now in the works at Vernon Drive and are scheduled to be ready by spring.

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