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To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)
Date: 11/10/2022 5:51:17 PM
Subject: [Memo re: 2022-2023 Winter Response Strategy for People Experiencing Homelessness](#)

[Dear Mayor and Council,](#)

The attached memo from General Manager of ACCS Sandra Singh provides an update on the 2022-2023 winter response strategy for people experiencing homelessness. Highlights include:

- This year's Winter Response Strategy will provide an additional 329 overnight spaces to ensure people experiencing unsheltered homelessness can access a safe, warm, place to come inside during the cold and wet winter months
 - Five Temporary Winter Shelters will be open every night between November 2022 and March 2023, providing 151 additional shelter spaces. These TWS beds provide access to spaces to people experiencing homelessness across the city and their operations are funded by BC Housing.
 - Five Extreme Weather Response Shelters will activate at 0C and will provide 88 additional overnight spaces.
 - Five Warming Centre sites will provide up to 140 drop-in spaces when activated.
- Two City-owned social service centres (Gathering Place and Evelyne Saller Centre) extend their operating hours to provide vital services such as hot meals and showers, and a warm place to be inside before the nightly spaces open.
- Staff will also continue working with senior government and non-profit partners to identify and activate additional spaces and increase services for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

Should you have any questions, please contact Sandra Singh (Sandra.singh@vancouver.ca) and she will ensure the queries are responded to through the weekly Council questions process.

Best,
Paul

Paul Mochrie (he/him)
City Manager
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sḵwx̱w̱ú7mesh (Squamish), and səliłwətał (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.

MEMORANDUM

November 10, 2022

TO: Mayor & Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager
Teresa Jong, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office
Maria Pontikis, Director, Civic Engagement and Communications
Rosemary Hagiwara, Acting City Clerk
Kareem Allam, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office
Trevor Ford, Director of Operations, Mayor's Office
David Grewal, Senior Advisor, Mayor's Office
Celine Mauboules, Managing Director of Housing and Homelessness Services

FROM: Sandra Singh, General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services

SUBJECT: 2022-2023 Winter Response Strategy for People Experiencing Homelessness

RTS #: N/A Provide RTS#. If no RTS#, type N/A

PURPOSE

This memo provides an update on the 2022-2023 winter response strategy for people experiencing homelessness.

SUMMARY

Supported significantly by the Province, the City activates additional indoor spaces over the winter months to support people experiencing unsheltered homelessness to come inside and keep warm. This year's Winter Response Strategy will provide an additional 329 spaces to ensure people experiencing unsheltered homelessness can access a safe, warm, place to come inside during the cold and wet winter months.

The overall shelter capacity in Vancouver, when all shelters, EWR shelters and warming centres are activated is over 1,758 spaces. (See Appendix A for a detailed list of winter response sites.)

Winter Response Additional Capacity 2022-2023	Capacity (approx.)
Temporary Winter Shelters (open every night)	151
Extreme Weather Response (upon activation)	78
Warming Centre (upon activation)	100
Total (to date)	329
Existing Shelter Capacity	
Year Round Shelters	1250
TOTAL Capacity (approx.)	1,500+

BACKGROUND

The City of Vancouver's emergency shelter system is comprised of year round shelters open 365 days a year and a winter response strategy that includes additional sites that are opened during the winter months.

Year Round Shelter Spaces Currently in Operation

There are currently 1,250+ shelter beds available 365 days a year in Vancouver.

Permanent year round shelter beds: ~900 beds

These shelters serve a range of community members (men, women, seniors, youth), and offer a range of services. These shelters are funded by BC Housing and depending on the operator, shelters may provide space for couples, pets, carts, meals and laundry and follow a harm reduction model.

Temporary year round shelters beds: ~400 beds

Temporary shelters are opened through a partnership between BC Housing and the City of Vancouver. The City typically leases the space and contributes to tenant improvements, and the Province provides operating funding and in some cases, also contributes to tenant improvements. Temporary shelter beds are in addition to the permanent shelter beds. There are currently ten temporary shelter sites which depending on the operator, provide space for couples, pets, carts, meals and laundry and follow a harm reduction model.¹

In addition to these beds, the City and Province partner to open additional spaces during the cold and wet winter months.

¹ This number does not include the winter only temporary shelter spaces. These spaces are included in the Winter Response Strategy below.

DISCUSSION

2022/2023 Winter Response Strategy

The City of Vancouver is committed to ensuring all residents have a safe, warm, place to come inside during the cold and wet winter months (please see Appendix A for a list of all sites). Through a long-standing partnership with the Province, additional shelter space is available from November to March, and further additional supports are activated during periods of extreme weather.

In addition to the permanent and temporary shelters that operate year round described above, there are four main components to the City's winter response. This includes:

1. Temporary winter response (TWS) shelters
2. Extreme Weather Response (EWR) shelters
3. Warming Centres
4. Extended hours at Social Service Centres & Daytime Winter Drop-in Centre.

1. Temporary Winter Response Shelters

For the 2022-2023 winter season, there are five temporary winter shelters that will be open every night between November 2022 and March 2023, providing 151 additional shelter spaces. These TWS beds provide access to spaces to people experiencing homelessness across the city and their operations are funded by BC Housing.

2. Extreme Weather Response (EWR) shelters

EWR shelters are Provincially funded (through BC Housing) and delivered through partnerships with community-based service providers and faith-based organizations to provide additional temporary emergency shelter spaces during periods of extreme winter weather which threaten the health and safety of individuals experiencing homelessness. These spaces are activated based on criteria including:

- Temperatures near zero with rainfall that makes it difficult or impossible for those experiencing homelessness to remain dry
- Sleet or freezing rain or Snow accumulation
- Sustained high winds
- Temperatures at or below 0°C, or "feels like" 0°C with wind chill
- Rainfall of at least 50mm in a 24-hour period
- EWR season runs October 15, 2022-April 15, 2023

EWR Sites 2017-2022

EWR Sites						
Sites	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Number of Nights open	69	86	90	107	114	TBD
Total Spaces	100	120	145	75	114	88*
Total Sites	4	6	6	5	6	5*

**As of November 9, 2022; more sites are being confirmed*

3. Warming Centres

Funded by the City of Vancouver, Warming Centres are activated when the temperature reaches -5 degrees Celsius (or feels like -5). Warming Centres do not provide beds or cots, but instead provide a place for individuals to come inside, warm up and have a snack during periods of extreme cold. Warming centres are located in community spaces, drop in centres, or other available locations.

This year, five warming centre sites will provide up to 140 spaces when activated. It is important to note that people may come and go and staff work to ensure anyone who wants to come inside to warm up has an opportunity to do so.

Note: Recent communications from the Province suggest that some funds to activate Warming Centres may be recoverable and that Provincially-supported activation could occur at -4C. Staff will adjust Warming Centre operations and any communications necessary as information is confirmed.

Warming Centre Sites 2017-2022

Warming Centre Sites						
Sites	2017-2018	2018-2019	2019-2020	2020-2021	2021-2022	2022-2023
Number of Nights open	32	43	17	13	25	TBD
Total Spaces	130	194	149	103	161*	116
Total Sites	5	6	4	5	7*	5

**During a typical activation, four sites were open with 101 spaces available*

4. Extended hours at Social Service Centres & Daytime Winter Drop-in Centre

In addition to overnight spaces, two City-owned social service centres (Gathering Place and Evelyne Saller Centre) extend their operating hours to provide vital services such as hot meals and showers, and a warm place to be inside before the nightly spaces open.

Communication Efforts to Bring People Inside

EWR and Warming Centre activations are broadcast to community service providers, government stakeholders, BC211, Translink, VPD, Engineering crews, and others. Staff also post activations via social media channels. The City's Homelessness Services Outreach team and multiple service provider organizations working with people experiencing unsheltered homelessness also encourage people to come indoors.

FINAL REMARKS

This year's Winter Response Strategy will provide an additional **329** spaces to ensure people experiencing unsheltered homelessness can access a safe, warm, place to come inside during the cold and wet winter months.

Staff will also continue working with senior government and non-profit partners to identify and activate additional spaces and increase services for people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness.

If Council requires further information, please feel free to contact me directly at sandra.singh@vancouver.ca and we will provide response through the weekly Council Q&A.



Sandra Singh, General Manager
Arts, Culture, and Community Services

sandra.singh@vancouver.ca

Appendix A: Winter Response Sites

Temporary Winter Response Shelters

Temporary Winter Response shelters are typically open on a nightly basis from November to March.

Temporary Winter Shelter Sites 2022-2023						
Shelter	Operator	Gender	Age	Details	Intake Info	Beds 2022-23
Evelyn Saller Centre 124 Dunlevy Ave	City of Vancouver	All	19+	All genders. 19+ years. Accessible site, but sleeping is mats only. No pets. No carts.	Nov 21- March 31, 2023 11:00pm- 8:00am Weekdays; 10:00pm- 8:00am Weekends	42
Gathering Place 609 Helmcken St 604-665-2391	City of Vancouver	All	19+	Partly wheelchair accessible (walkers, canes ok). Mats only. Pets OK. No carts.	Nov 1 – Mar 31, 2023 8:30pm to 7:30am	34
1648 East First Avenue Shelter (Added Capacity overnight) 604-225-9552	Community Builders Group	All	19+	Not Accessible (stairs). Pets Ok. Shopping carts ok (but remain outside due to stairs)	Nov 15- March, 31, 2023 10pm – 9am	20
Tenth Ave Alliance Church, 11 West 10th	Lookout	All	19+	Accessible, but mat program only.	Nov 15- March 31, 2023 10:30pm – 6:30am	25
Bud Osborne Shelter, 27 W Hastings St Phone: 604-681- 2806	PHS	All	19+	PM Hot meal; AM continental breakfast. Low barrier, wheelchair accessible site (no stairs). Pet friendly program: aggressive	Nov 1 – March 31, 2023, Operates between 7:00pm and 7:00am	40

				Cart storage as space allows. Shower available.		
Total Beds						151

Extreme Weather Response Shelters

EWR shelters are typically activated as a time-limited, weather responsive temporary shelter from October to March

Extreme Weather Response Shelter Spaces 2022-2023					
Address	Operator	Details	Hours	Contact	Mats 2022-23
Directions Youth Services Centre 1138 Burrard St	Directions Youth Services	All genders. Youth only, 19-24 years. Not fully accessible. Pets allowed (max 4).	10:00pm-7:00am	604-633-1472 Press 1	10 youth
Langara YMCA 282 W 49th Ave	Lookout Society	All genders. 19+ years. Accessible. Food offered on entering and in the morning. Enter using Gym doors at the rear parking lot. No pets.	8:00pm-7:00am	236-888-1335 (opening hours only)	30
Cascades Church 3833 Boundary Road	Lookout Society	All genders. 19+ years. Not accessible. Food offered. Enter through left side door in rear parking lot. No pets. No carts.	8:00pm-8:00am	604-498-3328 (opening hours only)	10
Bud Osborn Shelter 27 West Hastings Street	PHS	All genders. 19+ years. Couples. Pets OK. Carts OK.	TBD	778-222-8988	18
Salvation Army Belkin House 555 Homer St	Salvation Army	Operates between 9:00pm and 7:00am. Breakfast served at 7:30am.	9:00pm - 7:00am	Phone: 604-681-3405	20
Total					88

Warming Centres

Warming Centres are activated when the temp reaches -5 degrees Celsius (or feels like -5) between November and March

Warming Centre Spaces 2022-2023				
Address	Operator	Details	Hours	Number of spaces
Powell St Getaway 528 Powell St	Lookout Housing and Health Society	All genders, couples are welcome. Accessible, pets OK, bikes OK, carts OK, Overdose Prevention Site.	9:00pm – 7:00am	25
Odd Fellows Lodge 1443 W 8 th Ave	City of Vancouver (with Odd Fellows)	All genders, couples are welcome. Not accessible. Cannot accept pets or carts. Bikes OK. Hot beverages and snacks.	9:30pm – 8:00am	20
Marpole Neighbourhood House, 8585 Hudson St	Lookout Housing and Health Society	All genders, couples are welcome. Accessible, pets OK, bikes OK, carts OK. Hot beverages and snacks.	10:00pm – 9:00am	40
West End Community Centre 870 Denman (enter on Haro St)	City of Vancouver (with West End Community Centre)	All genders, couples are welcome. Accessible, pets OK. Hot beverages and snacks.	Dec 24 to Dec 29, 10:00pm – 8:00am. Dec 30 to 31, 10:00pm – 9:00am. Jan 1 to 2, 10:00pm – 6:00am.	16
Mount Pleasant Community Centre, 1 Kingsway	City of Vancouver (With Mount Pleasant Community Centre)	All genders, couples are welcome. Accessible, pets OK. Hot beverages and snacks.	10:00pm – 9:00am	20
Total spaces				116