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To: ["Direct to Mayor and Council - DL"](#)  
Date: 11/24/2022 10:35:41 AM  
Subject: Progress Update: Creating a Tiny Shelter Pilot Project (RTS #014716)

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Dear Mayor and Council,

The attached memo from Sandra Singh, General Manager, Arts, Culture & Community Services provides an overview of the Tiny Shelter Pilot (RTS #014716). The creation of the two year pilot offers an alternate option to people currently sleeping outside and who do not want to access a typical congregate setting. The model exists in other cities, but is the first in Vancouver.

Should Council have any questions please contact Sandra at [sandra.singh@vancouver.ca](mailto:sandra.singh@vancouver.ca) and she will make sure to respond through the regular weekly M&C communication.

Best,  
Paul

**Paul Mochrie** (he/him)  
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The City of Vancouver acknowledges that it is situated on the unceded traditional territories of the xʷməθkʷəy̓əm (Musqueam), Sqw̓w̓x̓w̓ú7mesh (Squamish), and səliwətaʔ (Tseil-Waututh) Nations.

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## MEMORANDUM

November 23, 2022

TO: Mayor & Council

CC: Paul Mochrie, City Manager  
Armin Amrolia, Deputy City Manager  
Karen Levitt, Deputy City Manager  
Rosemary Hagiwara, Acting City Clerk  
Maria Pontikis, Chief Communications Officer, CEC  
Teresa Jong, Administration Services Manager, City Manager's Office  
Kareem Allam, Chief of Staff, Mayor's Office  
Trevor Ford, Director of Operations, Mayor's Office  
David Grewal, Senior Advisor, Mayor's Office  
Andrea Law, General Manager, Development, Buildings & Licensing  
Celine Mauboules, Managing Director, Homelessness Services & Affordable Housing Programs  
Dan Garrison, Assistant Director, Housing Policy & Regulation

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

SUBJECT: Progress Update: Creating a Tiny Shelter Pilot Project

RTS #: 014716

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### PURPOSE

This memo provides an update on work to implement [Reporting Back: Creating a Tiny Shelter Pilot Project](#) (RTS 014716) approved by Council on February 9, 2022. It provides information about the design, procurement and permitting process for the Tiny Shelter Pilot Project (TSPP).

### BACKGROUND

On October 15, 2020, Council passed a motion "A Closer Look at Tiny Homes and Shelters," directing the Chief Building Official (CBO) and General Manager of Planning, Urban Design, and Sustainability to report back with analysis for potential implementation of Tiny Homes and Shelters as one of the approaches to providing transitional housing for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.

In July 2021, a memo was submitted to Council that outlined the findings of the initial review, next steps developed by staff to assess the feasibility of creating a Tiny Homes and Shelters

pilot project, and the options for zoning and permitting changes necessary to pilot the project. The City's regulatory environment allows for Tiny Shelters but not Tiny Homes.

In August 2021, a Market Sounding was completed by staff to seek industry recommendations and generate creative partnerships and opportunities to deliver Tiny Homes or Tiny Shelters. The Market Sounding process increased staffs' knowledge regarding recommended design/build concepts, costs, partnerships and operating models.

In February 2022, a [report](#) was submitted to Council setting out the framework and next steps for the creation of a TSPP. The report included the project plan, proposed capital and operating budgets and next steps in the development and implementation.

## **DISCUSSION**

### Development of the Tiny Shelter Pilot

Staff explored a number of models and site options based on direction from Council, feedback gathered through the Market Sounding, interviews with existing tiny shelter developers and operators, local churches, and various City departments. Existing sites interviewed were in Victoria, Cowichan, Port Alberni, Duncan, Seattle, Los Angeles, Oakland, and San Francisco. The Market Sounding received feedback from developers, builders and service providers/operators across North America.

The following recommendations guided the pilot project design:

- a) A low-barrier, shelter model (as opposed to self-contained units) for a rapid response to encampments, and homelessness in general;
- b) Operate with embedded supports by an experienced operator (financial efficiency and sustainability); and
- c) Fire safety is a priority for shelter guests and structures.

This model will serve individuals experiencing homelessness. It will be a low-barrier model to quickly provide people with shelter and wrap-around supports as an emergency response while permanent housing options are being pursued.

The benefits of this model include:

- Supporting the needs of people who don't feel adequately served in traditional shelters and thus remain unsheltered;
- Ability to assemble additional shelter spaces relatively quickly (depending on the site);
- Making use of parking lots or land that are not adequate for longer term housing;
- Co-locating the pilot with an existing shelter to increase capacity, use existing resources of an experienced operator; and
- The ability to potentially move the tiny shelters to different locations as needed.

### Deployment of the Tiny Shelter Pilot

The Tiny Shelter Pilot Project involves the construction of 10 Tiny Shelter structures (up to 18 guests) on the parking lot at the Klahowya Tillicum Lalum shelter located at City-owned 875 Terminal Avenue, which is an 80-bed shelter operated by Lu'ma Native Housing Society (Lu'ma) with operational funding from BC Housing.

Tiny Shelter guests will share the main shelter's washrooms, showers, laundry, meals, programs, indoor and outdoor amenity areas and 24/7 staff support. Eight of the Tiny Shelter structures will be geared specifically for couples and two will be accessible spaces for singles. The couple spaces will have either a double bed or two single beds. This will be the first shelter in the city to provide space for couples to stay in the same room together.

### Procurement Process and Implementation Details

The City issued a Request for Proposals for tiny home/shelter builders and received eight proposals in response to the RFP. The successful proponent is Pittfield Design Inc. from Surrey, BC. Pittfield will supply, delivery and install 10 prefabricated, 100 sq ft, single-level temporary structures.

Proposals were submitted from companies both locally and across North America. A widely used model in the USA has a base model that is not sufficient for the Canadian climate. The more robust version of that base model (with the necessary upgrades) is comparable in cost to that of the successful local proponent. Unfortunately, the above noted model was not adaptable to meet Vancouver Building Bylaw requirements.

#### *Tiny Shelter Structures*

The Tiny Shelters consist of a 100 sq. ft. room with a bed, room for belongings, two windows and electrical servicing for power outlets, heater and air conditioner. They will be constructed out of durable, fire resistant materials while remaining non-institutional in design.

Although the units will be used for short-term sheltering accommodation, considerations are given to building a trauma-informed, warm and welcoming environment. The structures will meet the requirements of the Vancouver Building By-law (VBBL) and the Project team is obtaining all relevant permits, including a Development Building Permit.

#### *Fire & Safety Features*

The Tiny Shelter structures will adhere to local fire code requirements and include:

- Interior wall and ceiling finishes flame-spread ratings not more than 150;
- Fire extinguishers;
- Hardwired combination smoke and carbon monoxide alarm;
- Connection to the onsite main fire alarm annunciator and exterior strobe light;
- Door and secondary egress route; and
- Structures will have a maximum 6 structures per cluster and be a minimum of 3 metres distance between clusters. Otherwise a minimum 2 metres between individual units.

In the event of a fire, staff will be alerted on the main annunciator panel in the staff office which is monitored 24/7. A strobe light will be activated on the outside of the unit for easy identification and an outdoor strobe and siren will activated on the exterior of the main shelter building.

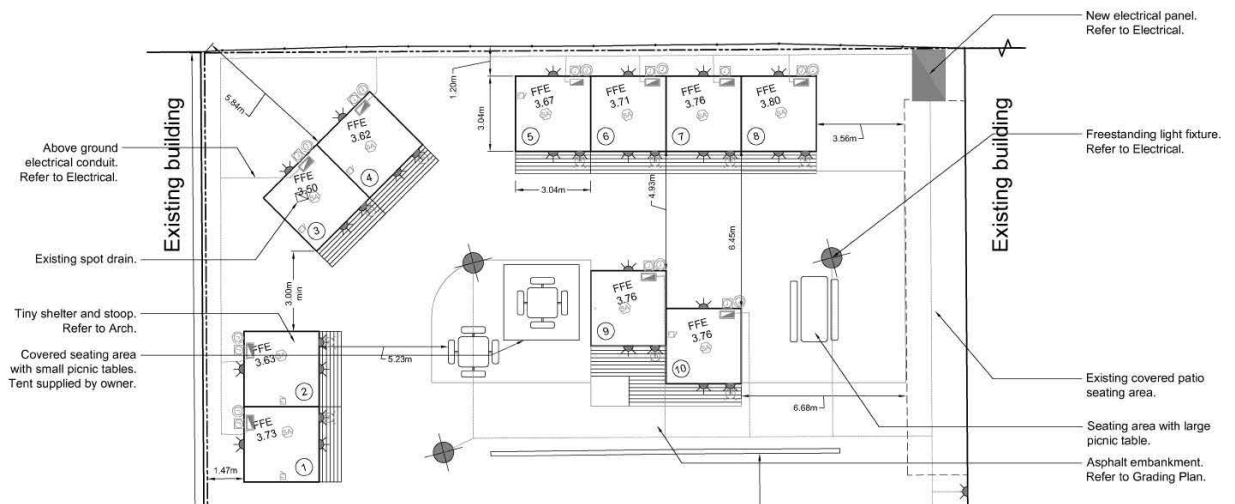
## Draft Site Plan

In drafting the site plan, special attention was paid to the following:

- Designing for the safety of shelter guests and staff which includes easy access by fire trucks and outdoor surveillance cameras;
- The location of the two accessible units will be placed close to the main shelter's building entrance and the accessible showers and toilet;
- Placement of the structures will allow staff to monitor the front and back of units;
- Outdoor lighting is designed for guest safety, staff monitoring and durability while reducing light pollution so shelter guests are able to sleep without disturbance; and
- There will be an accessible path from the Tiny Shelter structures to the main shelter building that is well lit during the night allowing guest access to the washrooms and other services within the main building at all times.

As per Figure 1 below, two outdoor communal spaces are provided for shelter guests. One space will be covered and both spaces will be well lit.

Figure 1: Draft Site Plan



## Process: Combined Development & Building Permit (DB)

The Development, Buildings and Licensing (DBL) department has worked with the project team to clarify the permitting requirements to include:

- A combined Development Permit and Building Permit; and
- Drawings for the Tiny Shelter units will have professional assurances.

## Operational Management Plan & Service Agreement

ACCS staff and the shelter operator, Lu'ma, have met with various Tiny Shelter village operators across North America to learn best practices. The team also met with shelter

providers who provide space for couples to stay together in order to learn operational recommendations.

Lu'ma has completed their operations budget and is developing the operational management plan, with ACCS support as needed. ACCS staff has worked with Legal Services to draft the services agreement between the City and Lu'ma. The operations plan is in its final stages of development.

### **TIMELINE AND NEXT STEPS**

Occupancy is projected to be early 2023. However, the timeline is dependant on a number of factors, including supply chain and electrical requirements. Staff will; keep Council apprised should there be delays.

Although it is not a requirement of the permitting process, staff will notify the adjacent neighbours through a post card mail out.

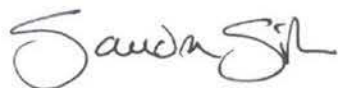
Recognizing the significant interest in the pilot, staff will ensure Mayor and Council are provided with an opportunity to tour the Tiny Shelters prior to occupancy and will work with Communications staff to schedule an open house for media and neighbours.

Notification is expected to be sent out in December, approximately one month before occupancy.

### **FINAL REMARKS**

Staff will continue implementation of each of the Pilot components and provide regular updates.

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



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

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