

Update on Shelter Approach and Next Steps

ISSUE

The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the City of Saskatoon's (the City's) role in supporting the Province in the identification and selection of new sites for shelters for people experiencing homelessness.

BACKGROUND

In October 2023, the Province requested that the City take the lead role in identifying two future shelter locations for 60 new Enhanced Emergency shelter beds.

The Governance and Priorities Committee, at its meeting held on October 11, 2023, considered a report titled [Proposed Roles and Next Steps for the City of Saskatoon Regarding Shelters for People Experiencing Homelessness](#) and resolved:

1. That the Administration proceed as outlined in the October 11, 2023, report of the City Manager;
2. That the City request the Province advertise and attend all open houses and public meetings with respect to proposed sites, process moving forward, and service providers, including attendance at a Council Public Hearing in the event of any required rezoning; and
3. That the Provincial Government be requested to provide greater detail to Civic Administration regarding the model of facility operations being proposed, the level of supports that will be included, and the plan for security and safety and well-being in the area.

The report referenced above outlined that the City would be the lead agency identifying site locations. The report included the following site selection criteria:

- room for approximately 30 beds each
- beds in an open shelter-type hall (with movable wall systems or partitions)
- some private rooms (accessed internally)
- an area suitable for office space for site staff
- showers, bathrooms, kitchen
- internal and external gathering spaces (amenity spaces) available on site be considered
- proximity to other services should be considered
- zoned appropriately if possible, or applicable for consideration under the City's Emergency Residential Shelter zoning provisions.

At its meeting on February 28, 2024, City Council resolved:

That the following criteria be added to those approved by the Governance & Priorities Committee on October 11, 2023, which are being used by the

Administration to evaluate and select sites for future shelters to be operated by the Province of Saskatchewan:

- At least 250 metres from an elementary school in the Saskatoon Public School or Greater Saskatoon Catholic School system.

In October 2023, the City received an application from the Ministry of SaskBuilds and Procurement, for a temporary Emergency Residential Shelter to be located at 1701 Idylwyld Drive North. This facility would provide a secure and medically supervised place to go, for up to 24 hours, for up to 15 individuals requiring complex care. Individuals will be brought to the facility by Saskatoon Police Service. The Ministry of Health and Ministry of Corrections, Policing and Public Safety has partnered with a third-party service provider to deliver health operations and security at the facility. The application for approval of an 18-month timeframe for operation of this use was approved by City Council at the November 22, 2023, Regular Business meeting.

CURRENT STATUS

The Province intends to open the 15-bed Complex Needs facility on Idylwyld Drive in the relatively near future. The Administration believes this facility will play a vital role in the community by providing a safe, fully supported recovery facility for individuals gripped by addiction, who are often those causing the most disruption in public spaces.

Since October of 2023, the Administration has been actively working with the Province to identify locations for temporary and permanent emergency shelters. The Saskatoon commercial realty community has been engaged as well and have brought forward sites for consideration.

Each site has been evaluated against the criteria. Existing buildings have been the priority focus of the search, as they are able to be brought into service faster than a new-build scenario. Although the majority of available built-upon sites have been deemed unsuitable, two options are currently proceeding through a due-diligence review.

Given the challenges in identifying potential sites, the Province and the Administration discussed the possibility of a single 60-bed facility, rather than two 30-bed facilities. Both the Province and the Administration are supportive of this approach, provided a suitable site can be identified and the appropriate operating conditions are in place.

Although the process of finding suitable sites has proven difficult and has taken longer than anticipated, the Province and the City continue to work collaboratively on identifying a suitable site or sites.

As this work continues, Administration is preparing communications materials and developing the approach for neighbourhood information sessions. This will include many important messages from the City of Saskatoon, the Province, and the future service provider (The Mustard Seed) which will be of benefit to the entire community to gain a broader understanding. The goal is to begin sharing this information as early as

possible so residents and community organizations can continue to be informed through the process.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

How the Sites will Function

The Request for Services (RFS) that the Province issued describes how the sites will be operated. Appendix A of the RFS is included as Appendix 1 and contains the description of the services being requested. Services are explained as follows:

“Through the supply of coordinated service delivery, the Services will: assist individuals experiencing homelessness to meet their immediate shelter and meal needs; co-ordinate wrap-around support to clients through case planning; and will support client transition to become successfully housed along the housing continuum, with the goal of improving client’s overall health and wellness.

Client Description:

- Experience chronic or periodic homelessness.
- Do not have resources or supports for other shelter options (i.e., no financial means to pay for accommodations or no option to stay with family or friends).
- Would benefit from integrated and wrap-around human service assistance to secure transitional or long-term accommodation.
- Episodic or chronic issues related to mental health and addictions may be present.
- Require temporary accommodations to enhance sense of safety and security.
- Most likely to have previous connections with government systems, including the criminal justice system, income assistance and child and family programs.
- Require trauma-informed approaches to service delivery.”

The new shelter(s) will be funded by the Ministry of Social Services on a block funding model. There is no charge to clients to stay in the shelter and receive the support services.

Regarding the City’s role, Appendix 2 - Integrated Operating Plan for Future Enhanced Emergency Shelter(s), is a draft operating plan that will be adjusted to be site-specific, and implemented once sites commence operation.

IMPLICATIONS

Implications have been identified in the forgoing information.

NEXT STEPS

The Administration will continue to work with the Province to identify a site or sites for Enhanced Emergency Shelters. Two sites are undergoing due diligence processes. The objective continues to be to put a site into operation as soon as possible.

Update on Shelter Approach and Next Steps

The Administration will provide monthly update reports to Council until the site or sites are open and functioning.

The Administration welcomes any clarification or redirection from Council on this matter.

APPENDICES

1. Appendix A of the Province's Request For Services
2. Draft Until Approved - Integrated Operating Plan for Future Enhanced Emergency Shelter(s)

Report Approval

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