

### Shelter Status Update

#### ISSUE

This report provides an update on Saskatoon shelter sites with a specific focus on the Province of Saskatchewan's Pacific Avenue temporary emergency residential shelter, Idylwyld emergency residential shelter, and the upcoming permanent shelter for people experiencing homelessness.

#### BACKGROUND

On October 6, 2023, the Province of Saskatchewan (Province) announced a strategy to address homelessness, including the addition of 60 new permanent shelter spaces in Saskatoon. Additionally, the Province would create two complex needs shelters (one in Regina and one in Saskatoon) to provide secure and medically supervised facilities for up to 24 hours.

The Governance and Priorities Committee, at its [meeting](#) on October 11, 2023, considered a report entitled Proposed Roles and Next Steps for the City Regarding Shelters for People Experiencing Homelessness. The report outlined the Province's request that the City of Saskatoon (City) take the lead role in identifying sites for shelters in Saskatoon. It advised the likely scenario was the City would need to identify two new shelter locations, each with room for approximately 30 individuals. Although permanent locations would be ideal, temporary locations would also be considered until permanent locations could be found.

City Council, at its Regular Business [meeting](#) on November 22, 2023, considered an application from the Province of Saskatchewan – Ministry of SaskBuilds and Procurement to establish an Emergency Residential Shelter at 1701 Idylwyld Drive North, as a temporary Emergency Residential Shelter.

City Council, at its Regular Business [meeting](#) on February 28, 2024, approved additional criteria to be used for selecting future shelter sites.

City Council, at its Regular Business [meeting](#) on May 29, 2024, received a report entitled Update on Shelter Approach and Next Steps, which identified the possibility of moving from two-30 bed facilities to a single 60-bed facility.

City Council, at its Regular Business [meeting](#) on September 25, 2024, received a report entitled Provincial Approach to Homelessness – Timeframe for Emergency Residential Shelter – 210 Pacific Avenue which outlined details for establishing this location as a temporary shelter.

City Council, at its Special Regular Business [meeting](#) on December 12, 2024, received a report entitled Update on Temporary Emergency Residential Shelter Funding which requested an increase of \$360,000 from the Reserve for Capital Expenditures and

approved a 18-month property tax exemption for the emergency temporary shelter located at 210 Pacific Avenue.

### **CURRENT STATUS**

The number of people experiencing homelessness in Saskatoon has increased rapidly in recent years. The 2024 Point in Time (PiT) Homelessness Count conducted in Saskatoon on October 8, 2024, identified 1,499 people experiencing homelessness, including 315 children and 175 youth. The summary totals for Saskatoon's Homelessness PiT Counts since 2008 are included (see Appendix 1).

### **Saskatoon's Current Permanent Shelters**

As defined in the Zoning bylaw, emergency residential shelters are temporary in nature and are an essential part of the housing continuum, offering immediate, temporary housing for individuals who are homeless or at risk. They may be operated as either basic or enhanced.

Basic emergency shelter: Offers limited shelter hours (e.g. 5:00 PM to 8:00 AM), limited meals and external referrals to other services. A basic shelter is sometimes referred to as a low-barrier shelter.

Enhanced emergency shelter: Provides 24 hours/day and 7 days/week shelter access, three meals a day, additional support services such as case management, wellness programs and assistance to permanent housing.

### **New Shelters**

In October 2023, the Province released its Provincial Approach to Homelessness, which identified 15 new complex needs emergency shelter spaces and 60 new permanent emergency shelter spaces for Saskatoon. The City has been working with the Province since fall of 2023 to identify a site for a permanent shelter. The Pacific Avenue emergency residential shelter is a temporary location while a new permanent shelter site is identified and developed.

### **Idylwyld Complex Needs Emergency Shelter (CNES)**

This 15-bed facility provides stabilization services and comprehensive treatment for addiction, trauma, depression and anxiety, with 24/7 access to medical professionals. It is operated by Edgewood Health Network, who have extensive experience working with individuals dealing with mental health and addictions.

City Council, at its Regular Business [meeting](#) on November 22, 2023, requested a six-month CNES update from the Ministry of Health. The six-month Utilization Report for City Council, received March 14, 2025 is included (see Appendix 2).

### **210 Pacific Avenue Temporary Enhanced Shelter**

The Pacific Avenue temporary enhanced shelter, operated by The Mustard Seed, is set to open on April 1, 2025. This 40-bed temporary enhanced shelter offers access to housing-focused case management, moving individuals to long-term sustainable housing.

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The City committed to provide additional security in the area around the site to address concerns from nearby businesses who provide services and activities to children. A contract with Commissionaires has been established. An integrated operating plan between The Mustard Seed, Saskatoon Police Services, Saskatoon Fire Department and Commissionaires has been developed to provide a continuous presence of safety personnel in the area around the shelter. A site map of this area is included (see Appendix 3).

In late March 2025, individual meetings were held with these businesses. Representatives from The Mustard Seed, Saskatoon Police Services, Saskatoon Fire Department, the City, the Government of Saskatchewan and Commissionaires presented the shelter's operational and safety plans, answered questions and provided contact information for ongoing communication.

### **Permanent Enhanced Shelter**

Since October of 2023, the City has been actively working with the Province to identify locations for a permanent shelter. Two locations are currently being considered for a permanent shelter site, and the preferred site is expected to be made public in the coming months.

The shelter will be operationally funded by the Province and is anticipated to contain approximately 60 new permanent shelter beds.

## **DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS**

### **Process for site selection of new shelter**

The City has been working closely with the province in identifying site locations for a permanent enhanced shelter. Each site has been evaluated against Council-approved site selection criteria. The search has included both existing buildings and vacant sites which could accommodate a new build.

Both the Province and the City assess potential sites and determine whether they will be suitable. The majority of available built-upon sites have been deemed unsuitable for various reasons, primarily cost, being too close to schools, or incompatible zoning. Countless sites have been reviewed and assessed, and there are two current options proceeding through review. Administration is optimistic that one of these two sites will receive endorsement from both Provincial and City Administrations in the next eight weeks.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

There are no financial implications identified at this time. Once the permanent site has been finalized, Administration will initiate the appropriate steps. Public information meetings will be held regardless of whether or not the site requires rezoning. If rezoning is required, Administration will follow the full rezoning process, which ultimately results in consideration by City Council.

## **OTHER IMPLICATIONS**

There are no privacy, legal, social or environmental implications identified.

**NEXT STEPS**

Administration will continue to work with the Province to finalize the site selection process. Once a site has been selected, a public announcement will be made and the public information meeting will be arranged.

**APPENDICES**

1. Findings across Saskatoon PIT Counts 2008 to 2022
2. Six Month Utilization Report for City Council – Complex Needs Emergency Shelters
3. Pacific Shelter Site Map

**REPORT APPROVAL**

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SP/2025/CS/GPC/Shelter Status Update/mt