



City of Port Moody

Report/Recommendation to Council

Date: October 30, 2020
Submitted by: Community Services Department – Recreation Services Division
Subject: Warming Centre

Purpose

To discuss potential municipal responses to reduce the impacts of extreme cold weather on vulnerable community members in the Tri-Cities area.

Recommended Resolution(s)

THAT the report dated October 30, 2020 from the Community Services Department – Recreation Services Division regarding Warming Centre be received for information.

Background

At the Regular meeting of Council on January 15, 2020 Council passed the following resolution:

RC20/059

THAT staff be directed to liaise with the Coordinator of the Tri-Cities Homelessness and Housing Task Group and potentially BC Housing to understand what would be needed to provide a warming shelter at a Port Moody Facility, and report back to Council with options as recommended in the report dated January 15, 2020 from Councillor Amy Lubik regarding Request for Council Support to Explore Warming Shelters in Port Moody.

Staff contacted the Co-ordinator of the Tri-Cities Homelessness and Housing Task Force for information on extreme cold weather shelter needs. Based on their recommendation, the two homelessness service providers, Hope for Freedom (Bridge Shelter provider) and Trinity Church (Extreme Weather Shelter provider), were also contacted.

Through these discussions, staff learned that the need for weather shelters is on the rise, along with the number of homeless community members in the Tri-Cities.

Discussion

Given current COVID-19 restrictions, the Tri-Cities have experienced the unexpected closures of the Extreme Weather Shelters (EWS). The two shelters operated in tandem with Trinity Church opening only if Hope for Freedom reached capacity. When Hope for Freedom closed their 2020/2021 shelter program due to challenges in meeting the COVID-19 physical distancing requirements, Trinity Church was forced to follow suit. As they are unable to meet the demands without the support of the Hope for Freedom shelter, they were concerned the need would overwhelm their resources.

There is currently no daytime warming shelter program offered for homeless community members in the Tri-Cities. Daytime shelters have been identified as a valuable opportunity to connect vulnerable community members with a sustainable, long-term support base, thereby reducing the severe threat to health and life that prolonged exposure to cold weather poses.

Cities are advised to create networks or partnerships with local groups or volunteers, particularly those groups that are already serving vulnerable populations. The goal is to create a response plan that is pro-actively activated and connects resources to people that need them most. A thorough plan also outlines activation criteria, pre-prepared materials, and actions for smooth implementation in the case of extreme cold.

At the moment, the City does not have the resources available to create a complete, long-term response plan. Thus, a pilot program in partnership with a service provider may offer the City the ability to best serve vulnerable and homeless community members while gathering the information necessary for long-term planning.

A service provider specialized in homelessness programming can effectively staff a daytime warming shelter program and address the unique needs of homeless community members such as: accessing long-term overnight shelters, attending medical appointments, seeking substance abuse programming, and completing paperwork. Additionally, due to the closure of local shelters, mats and bedding for daytime napping can be made available through the service provider for the duration of a pilot program.

Earlier this year, the City's Emergency Operation Centre had investigated sourcing options for cooling/misting equipment; with the thought of outfitting tents already owned by the City. In early planning for cold weather shelters, a similar tent structure was considered in order to develop a mobile warming/cooling program that could serve homeless community members throughout the year at areas they are known to gather. However, due to the high flame spread rating of event tents, we would be unable to heat the tent space without posing serious risk to the safety of staff and guests.

As such, staff commenced with reviewing options in the civic buildings based on the following criteria:

- Proximity to Port Moody/Coquitlam border to effectively serve the Tri-Cities;
- Proximity to well-served transit routes;
- Large interior space to encourage physical distancing;
- Large kitchen to allow for physical distancing;

- Multiple bathrooms; and
- Space to serve a maximum of eight people.

Kyle Centre was identified as the most suitable due to meeting the above criteria in addition to being close to the hospital, having tables and chairs on-location, and being currently included in the daily maintenance schedule for Facility staff. Kyle Centre is currently used by the Port Moody Arts Centre for limited daytime art classes. Should this location be selected, the cancellation of classes during the extreme weather event would negatively impact Arts Centre Programs at Kyle Centre.

Pilot Program

A pilot program could be offered from January – March 2021. If staff were directed to initiate a pilot program, a number of activities would require attention. The details are as follows:

- Hours of operation 9:00am-7:00pm.
- Establish Kyle Centre as the host building and develop supporting policies and agreements.
- Establish guidelines defining an extreme cold emergency and when the warming shelter program would be activated such as:
 - When temperatures reach 0°C or below, or feel like 0°C or below;
 - Rainfall that makes it difficult or impossible to remain dry;
 - Snow accumulation; and/or
 - Sustained high winds; etc.
- Establish a clear process for activation of the Warming Centre such as:
 - Extreme weather event declared by BC Housing or Tri-Cities Homelessness and Housing Task Force;
 - Notification sent to City staff;
 - Notification from City staff to Port Moody Arts Centre;
 - Notification to General Public and Tri-Cities homelessness service providers;
 - 24-hour window to clear Kyle Centre Dance Room of all program items;
 - On-call staff notified and availability confirmed, mobilized to make operational purchases;
 - Centre open for service; and finally
 - Warming Centre declared closed at the cessation of the extreme weather event.
- Communicate extreme cold information to the public, including:
 - Sending notifications of the activation to Tri-Cities contacts;
 - Helpful tips to accessing warm space and limit exposure to extreme weather;
 - Notifications via social media regarding potential compounding factors such as power outages, clothing shortages, food shortages; and
 - Encouraging neighbours and business owners to refer vulnerable members of the community to the warming shelter program.

Calculations to support this pilot program were based on 60 days of activation at a maximum capacity of eight guests. The number of activated days was estimated from the range provided by Trinity Church (**Attachment 1**).

Other Option(s)

1. THAT staff be directed to proceed with a Pilot Program for January – March 2021 as outlined in the report dated October 30, 2020 from the Community Services Department regarding Warming Centre;

AND THAT staff seek grant opportunities to support the Pilot Program outlined in the report dated October 30, 2020.

Financial Implications

The costs associated with a Warming Centre will vary depending on activation needs. There would be no loss of City rental revenue during COVID-19 as the City is not programming the space; however, there would be a financial impact post-COVID-19.

The Art Centre is running a small number of programs at Kyle Centre, and last minute closure of Kyle Centre to these programs will have a negative impact upon their revenue and customer satisfaction.

Costs for services based on an eight-person maximum occupancy for 60 days during the period of January – March, 2021 would be \$43,941.

Wages	\$31,500
Supplies	\$ 3,505
Food & Bev	\$ 2,936
Cleaning	\$ 6,000
Total =	\$43,941

A detailed budget can be found in (**Attachment 2**).

Communications and Civic Engagement Initiatives

Subject to Council's direction, a communication plan may be required. A municipal response to extreme cold could involve engagement with neighbouring municipalities, non-profit service providers, School District No. 43, and local businesses.

Council Strategic Plan Objectives

The 2019-2022 Council Strategic Plan priority of Health City includes a focus on providing local services and access to amenities to meet the needs of all residents, ensuring community safety and emergency preparedness.

Attachments

1. EWS Trinity Church Figures.
2. Proposed Budget.

Report Author

Ron Higo
Acting General Manager of Community Services

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	Warming Centre.docx
Attachments:	- Attachment 1 - EWS Trinity Church Figures.pdf - Attachment 2 - Proposed Budget.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Nov 16, 2020

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Ron Higo, General Manager of Community Services - Nov 14, 2020 - 6:31 PM

Dorothy Shermer, Corporate Officer - Nov 16, 2020 - 9:49 AM

Rosemary Lodge, Manager of Communications and Engagement - Nov 16, 2020 - 11:48 AM

Paul Rockwood, General Manager of Finance and Technology - Nov 16, 2020 - 12:47 PM

Tim Savoie, City Manager - Nov 16, 2020 - 1:28 PM