

# Municipal Update: Helping address homelessness in the Halifax region

Date of issue: July 15, 2022

*The Halifax Regional Municipality's priority has been, and continues to be, treating those experiencing homelessness with dignity – and continuing to work with community partners to find ways to provide support to them within our organization's capacity and scope. The following is an update on ongoing and new initiatives being undertaken to help address homelessness in our region.*

## **Modular Units**

- Construction is completed and occupancy permits have been issued for both modulares.
- Since the municipality completed installation of the modular units, the province, in partnership with its service provider, Out of The Cold, has assessed and placed many individuals experiencing homelessness in the emergency accommodations locations (modulars). Based on information provided by the province, the Dartmouth modulars are near capacity and the Halifax modulars are at approximately 50% capacity.

## **Designated Outdoor Sheltering Locations**

As of 6:00 a.m., July 14, 2022, the four designated outdoor sheltering locations were occupied as follows:

1. **Barrington Street Green Space, Halifax** – nine tents on site; capacity for eleven more tents
2. **Lower Flinn Park, Halifax** – one tent on site; capacity for three more tents
3. **Green Road Park, Dartmouth** – no tents on site; capacity for eight tents
4. **Geary Street Green Space, Dartmouth** – one tent and three structures on site; the location is fully occupied

## **Signage & Site Rules**

- Signage is being placed at each of the four locations, including site layouts and the rules and regulations that apply to everyone, such as [By-Law P-600 – Respecting Municipal Parks](#), [By-Law N-200 – Respecting Noise](#), and [By-Law O-109 – Respecting Open Air Burning](#).
- The municipality has produced the [Sheltering in Designated Municipal Parks](#) information pamphlet, distributed it to individuals in Meagher Park and provided copies to Street Navigators as a resource for those experiencing homelessness in our community. Copies have also been shared with the provincial Department of Community Services and are available through their offices.

## **Portable Toilets, Garbage Cans & Garbage Collection**

- All four designated locations have been equipped with portable toilets and garbage cans, and garbage collection is in place.
- On July 13 an additional portable toilet was placed at the corner of North Street and Brunswick Street as part of the Barrington Street Green Space to accommodate the larger number of people at this location.
- The portable toilet for Lower Flinn Park is currently across the road next to the parking lot for Horseshoe Island Park. It is acknowledged that this is not an ideal spot and municipal staff are looking at options to provide better access.

## **Storage Boxes**

- Storage boxes will be installed at all four locations by July 15, providing those sheltering with access to a space that will protect belongings from the elements.
- Two storage boxes currently at Meagher Park will be cleaned and relocated to the Barrington Street Green Space once reconstruction efforts begin at Meagher Park.

# Municipal Update: Helping address homelessness in the Halifax region

Date of issue: July 15, 2022

## Water

- Water delivery is currently being organized for each of the four locations. It is planned to have water bottles delivered to each site in the short term and these are expected to be available at each location the week of July 18.
- The municipality is working with other partners to explore more sustainable options for providing water access.

## Meagher Park

- Further to the [municipal statement on July 5, 2022](#), the municipality has set July 17 as the date for those who had been sheltering in Meagher Park to transition to a designated outdoor sheltering location – if options for temporary housing were either not available or would not / could not be accepted.
- The provincial Department of Community Services has confirmed that those sheltering in Meagher Park at the time of the closure have all previously been in discussions with service providers about available housing options and been assessed for housing options. Not everyone is eligible for, or can accept the options that are currently available. Personal choice impacts people's options.
- Since the announcement of the park closure, the municipality has made additional funding available to Street Navigators to help those sheltering in Meagher Park make the transition to one of the four designated outdoor sheltering locations.
- After July 17, municipal staff will visit the park to confirm that everyone has moved from the park. If anyone remains, staff will engage them on a case-by-case basis to determine their status and inquire about their plans to relocate. Service providers have been and will continue to engage with individuals experiencing homelessness to identify options and resources that are available.
- If there are no housing options, or if individuals do not or cannot accept the options provided, the municipality will work with service providers to help those experiencing homelessness relocate to one of the designated locations.
- If someone refuses to leave the park, for whatever reason, a negotiated settlement with municipal staff will be attempted. If that is not possible, a response plan will be developed by municipal staff which may include requesting the assistance of Halifax Regional Police, as a last resort. Failure to comply with the closure of the park is an offence under the Municipal Parks Bylaw and the *Protection of Property Act, R.S.N.S., 1989*.
- Once vacated, the municipality will be fencing Meagher Park so that reconstruction work can be completed – returning the park to its original state. Over the coming months, planned work includes assessing the condition of the park, cleaning the area and resodding the grass.

## Lived Experience Committee

- The intent of the committee is to ensure the voices and perspectives of persons with lived experience of homelessness are heard in the decision-making process.
- United Way has recruited facilitators for the Lived Experience Committee and have developed a facilitators guide for the first consultations. Some members of the committee have been recruited and more are being identified over the next two weeks.

**For more information about ongoing efforts by the municipality to help address homelessness in our region visit [halifax.ca/addressinghomelessness](https://halifax.ca/addressinghomelessness).**