

Municipal Update: Helping address homelessness in the Halifax region

Date of issue: November 25, 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 efforts to help address homelessness in our region.

Designated Outdoor Sheltering Locations

As of 11 a.m., Tuesday, Nov. 22, the four designated outdoor sheltering locations were occupied as follows:

1. **Barrington Street Green Space, Halifax** – one tent; capacity for seven more tents. *Note: Other sites at this location are undergoing cleanup.*
2. **Lower Flinn Park, Halifax** – eight tents on site; the location is fully occupied.
3. **Green Road Park, Dartmouth** – six tents and one structure on site; capacity for one more tent.
4. **Geary Street Green Space, Dartmouth** – five tents and two structures on site; the location is fully occupied.

Correctional Ballfield, Lower Sackville

- The municipality has also been aware of seven individuals sheltering for a number of months at Unnamed Park 29, located off Sackville Drive along the Little Sackville River.
- The municipality does not own the property and as such the location could not accommodate a designated site.
- After consultations with the local Councillor, the individuals who have been sheltering at this location and local service providers, the municipality has established a fifth designated outdoor sheltering location at the Correctional Ballfield, 191 Cobequid Road, Lower Sackville, to accommodate these individuals. This new designated outdoor sheltering location is on land that has been determined by the municipality to be surplus, meets all of the criteria identified in the associated [June 2022 staff report](#), and is currently not in use as a recreational baseball field as it is closed for the season.
- This new location has capacity for eight tents, and there are currently seven tents in the space, with capacity for one more tent. As with the other designated outdoor sheltering locations, water delivery and garbage collection has started at this location.
- In future municipal updates this location will be included in the list above.

Future potential locations

- Further to the Mayor's public ask to the Minister of Municipal Affairs for provincial lands to be used for temporary crisis housing, provincial and municipal staff have been reviewing several provincial properties for suitability. Further updates will be provided once consensus has been achieved between provincial and municipal officials.

Staff Report – Lived Experience Committee and Consultation

- On May 3, 2022, Regional Council directed that a lived experience committee be established to advise municipal staff. 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.
- The municipality contracted the United Way Halifax to undertake this work and the researchers have completed the first round of engagement and prepared the [Lived Experience Consultation Report](#) which was presented to Regional Council on Nov. 22.

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- Regional Council accepted the proposed recommendations that municipal staff:
 - continue to seek lived experience expertise from those living in encampments to guide municipal work to address homelessness and its impacts; and
 - respond to the recommendations of the Lived Experience Consultation Report with additional analysis as part of the broader report on the municipality's approach to homelessness, which is currently being prepared for delivery to Regional Council in the coming weeks.

Winter Emergency Shelters

- The municipality is supporting the Province of Nova Scotia in the operation of an emergency shelter this winter for those experiencing homelessness.
- The shelter is located at 2029 North Park Street in Halifax, with staffing and support services provided by 902 Man Up. The shelter opened on Saturday, Oct. 1 and will operate from 9 p.m. to 7 a.m. daily with 25 beds. The shelter serves all genders.
- This number increased to 40 beds on Tuesday, Nov. 15 and includes day programming.
- The municipality will provide operational site maintenance for the shelter including providing regular garbage pickup.
- For more information, see the Province of Nova Scotia's [news release](#).
- On Nov. 24 the Province of Nova Scotia announced funding for another emergency shelter at 61 Dundas Street, Dartmouth. The shelter is being run in partnership with Christ Church and 902 Man Up and will provide 20 beds for men, as an evening and overnight shelter only.
- For more information, see the Province of Nova Scotia's [news release](#).

Assistance through the winter months

- The municipality continues to work closely with the Province of Nova Scotia and service providers as the winter season approaches and will continue to provide support for those experiencing homelessness. This includes the planning for potentially using select municipal facilities as temporary emergency shelters or warming centres during severe weather events.
- Over the past year, support has included:
 - Supporting the Province of Nova Scotia in the operation of a 24/7 emergency shelter at 2029 North Park Street;
 - Building modular units at two sites in Dartmouth and Halifax, with the capacity to house 64 individuals experiencing homelessness (26 in Dartmouth and 38 in Halifax);
 - During last winter, approving \$70,000 to a coalition of 11 community service providers for use as crisis funding for hotel stays to support individuals experiencing homelessness. In conjunction with service providers, the municipality has also directly covered the cost of hotel rooms for some individuals; and
 - Working with both orders of government to provide accommodations through the Rapid Housing Initiative with 70 additional individuals being accommodated in spring 2022 and 65 additional spaces expected to open in the coming weeks.

For more information about ongoing efforts by the municipality to help address homelessness in our region visit halifax.ca/addressinghomelessness.