

Municipal Update: Helping address homelessness in the Halifax region

Date of issue: Nov. 17, 2023

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.

New Emergency Shelter

- The municipality is supporting the Province of Nova Scotia in the operation of an emergency shelter for those experiencing homelessness. The 24-hour shelter, located at 197-199 Windmill Road in Dartmouth, opens today, Friday, Nov. 17, at 4 p.m. and will remain open for the next 30 months, until May 2026.
- Starting with 50 beds for people of all genders – including youth aged 16 and older, if needed – the shelter can add more beds based on community need and extreme weather events as well as accommodating people with pets.
- The municipality will be providing in-kind property maintenance support for the shelter site, including required inspections and any necessary work to bring the site to compliance. The municipality will also be providing regular garbage pickup and snow clearing.
- The province will be prioritizing those living in encampments for placement in the shelter. Municipal staff will ensure those staying in encampments are aware of the shelter, how to access it, and facilitate relocation to the shelter.
- For more information, see the Province of Nova Scotia's [news release](#).

Grand Parade

- With the new emergency shelter that is opening today, there is an alternative location for those currently sheltering in Grand Parade.
- Municipal outreach workers and street navigators are engaging with those currently sheltering in Grand Parade to assist in their relocation.
- The municipality is also advising people sheltering in Grand Parade that remaining in this location for the winter is not an option due to safety concerns. The use of large snow clearing equipment to conduct winter operations in Grand Parade poses a critical safety risk for those currently sheltering in the area.
- If those sheltering in Grand Parade do not or cannot accept alternative indoor sheltering location options, the municipality will work with service providers to support people moving to one of the municipality's current or new [designated outdoor sheltering locations](#).
- Status of Halifax Christmas Tree Lighting
 - On Thursday, Nov. 16, the Christmas Tree was placed in Grand Parade
 - Holiday festivities, typically associated with the tree lighting, will take place at Peace and Friendship Park on Saturday, Nov. 25
 - The lighting of the tree in Grand Parade will occur on the evening of Nov. 25 at the conclusion of the Saltwire Parade of Lights (exact time not available)
 - As more details are confirmed, information will be shared on halifax.ca and promoted via social media, paid advertising, etc.

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Waverley Inn Shelter

- The former Waverley Inn in Halifax's south end is set to host a dedicated, long-term housing facility for women and gender-diverse people experiencing homelessness. The shelter is planned to open next month.
- YWCA Halifax will provide 24-hour on-site support for up to 32 residents, including referrals to mental health and addictions counselling, employment services and skills training.
- The municipality will be providing in-kind property maintenance support for the shelter site, including required inspections and any work required to bring the site to compliance. The municipality will also be providing regular garbage pickup and snow clearing.

Tiny Home Community

- The municipality is working with the Province of Nova Scotia to build a tiny home community. This pilot community will have 52 units, providing housing for about 62 people. The community will be built on surplus municipal land in Lower Sackville. This surplus land is currently being used as a designated outdoor sheltering location.
- It is anticipated that 30 units will be complete by next spring and people will be in them next summer. The remaining 22 units are expected to be complete by next fall. If successful, similar communities may be created in other areas of the municipality and across the province.
- Rent will be geared to income, which means that rent will be no more than 30 per cent of a person's income. Community residents will be selected from the *HRM By Name List* and will receive the wraparound support they need to help them connect to employment and more permanent housing.
- The municipality is providing the land at no cost and will also be providing regular garbage pickup, snow clearing and general property maintenance.
- For more information, see the Province of Nova Scotia's [news release](#).

Pallet Shelters

- In partnership with the Province of Nova Scotia and service providers, 100 pallet shelters will be installed in the municipality. The provincial funding will also provide bed frames, mattresses and desks, as well as support operations for the pallet shelter village.
- Pallet is a North American leader in rapid-response shelter villages designed by people with lived experience. These communities will include single occupancy rooms, plus bathroom and laundry units and on-site supports by local service providers.
- The Province of Nova Scotia will provide two parcels of provincial land in the municipality to host the pallet shelter villages. The municipality is providing additional land, land servicing and preparation support, as well as operational oversight of the 100 units.
- For more information, see the Province of Nova Scotia's [news release](#).

Informational video series via social media

- In the coming weeks, the municipality will be launching a series of informational videos addressing commonly asked questions about the current homelessness situation in the region.
- Each video will feature municipal staff – including Max Chauvin, Director of Housing & Homelessness – as well as community partners and will be posted on the municipality's [Instagram](#), [Facebook](#),

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[Twitter \(X\)](#), [LinkedIn](#) and [YouTube](#) accounts. Residents will be encouraged to leave their questions in the comments, where they will be answered and potentially form the topics of future videos.

- This initiative supports one of the four roles within the mandate of the municipality identified in the *Framework for Addressing Homelessness*: supporting public education efforts.
- The videos will be published on the [Helping address homelessness webpage](#) at the end of the series.

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