

Municipal Update: Helping address homelessness in the Halifax region

Date of issue: July 27, 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.

Special Meeting of Regional Council

- At 1 p.m. on Tuesday, August 2, there will be a Special Regional Council meeting, with municipal staff providing an information presentation regarding the status of municipal efforts to support those experiencing homelessness in our community.
- The agenda for this virtual meeting is available on the [website](#).

Designated Outdoor Sheltering Locations

As of 1 p.m., July 24, 2022, the four designated outdoor sheltering locations were occupied as follows:

1. **Barrington Street Green Space, Halifax** – Nine tents on site; capacity for 11 more tents
2. **Lower Flinn Park, Halifax** – one tent on site; capacity for three more tents
3. **Green Road Park, Dartmouth** – one tent on site; capacity for seven tents
4. **Geary Street Green Space, Dartmouth** – two tents and three structures on site; the location is fully occupied

Signage & Site Rules

- Work started on July 22, 2022, to install signage 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](#). It is anticipated that this will be completed by mid-August.

Water

- Water delivery was organized for each of the four locations, with the first delivery completed on July 21, 2022.
- Feedback from those sheltering at the designated locations has been positive and delivery volumes are being adjusted based on the needs expressed by these individuals. The next delivery will be completed by July 28, 2022.

Lived Experience Committee

- The intent of the Lived Experience Committee is to ensure the voices and perspectives of persons with lived experience of homelessness are heard in the decision-making process.
- The first meetings of the committee have occurred, and a preliminary report is expected to be delivered to municipal staff by mid-August 2022.
- The consultation process is continuing.

Meagher Park

- Further to the [municipal statement on July 5, 2022](#), the [municipal update on July 15, 2022](#), and the [municipal update on July 22, 2022](#), the municipality set July 17, 2022, as the date for those who had been sheltering in Meagher Park to transition to a designated outdoor sheltering location – if offers by the province or service providers for temporary housing were either not available or would not / could not be accepted.

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- The health and safety conditions in the park continue to place those sheltering in this location in an increasingly vulnerable situation. The designated outdoor sheltering locations provide a safer alternative with access to additional supports and services.
- As of 2 p.m., July 26, 2022, there are approximately five individuals sheltering in Meagher Park. The majority of these individuals arrived after the July 5, 2022 announcement of the park closure. Note that it is difficult to confirm the number of individuals in a certain location given the transitory situation for many who are experiencing homelessness.
- Further to efforts leading up to, and throughout, the transition period which ended on July 17, 2022, the municipality has continued its civilian-led engagement approach. Municipal staff have visited the park regularly to perform wellness checks with those who remain onsite, connect them with service providers, inform them of the closure of the park and explain the services that are available at each of the four designated outdoor sheltering locations.
- The municipality is aware of various groups who have been protesting at Meagher Park since July 17, 2022, and municipal staff have been in contact with representatives from some of these groups to ensure service providers have unimpeded access to the park to support those experiencing homelessness. Staff have spoken with individuals who have indicated association with Halifax Mutual Aid; Permanent, Accessible, Dignified and Safer (PADS) Housing; and Nova Scotians United. Staff are also aware that members of the Freedom Convoy have been on site.
- Based on municipal staff discussions with those sheltering in the park, as well as some of the protestors onsite, there are indications that protestors may proactively engage in conflict should the municipality take steps to enforce the July 5, 2022 notice to vacate and remove individuals from the park.
- Municipal efforts remain focused on assisting those who are experiencing homelessness and encouraging those who remain in the park to vacate the site and accept alternative options, including the support and services currently provided at the designated outdoor sheltering locations.
- However, if someone refuses to leave the park, for whatever reason, and a negotiated settlement is not successful, the response plan 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*.
- As previously stated, 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.

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