

ATTACHMENT A

July 10, 2018

Mr. Leonard Krog
Member of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia
4-77 Victoria Crescent
Nanaimo, BC

Re: The Landing Pad, Nanaimo's Daytime Drop-in Resource Centre for Homeless Individuals Project Proposal

Dear Mr. Krog:

Please accept the below correspondence in support of Nanaimo's request for Provincial support in funding a daytime drop-in resource centre for homeless people. We appreciate your good offices in bringing this to the attention of the Provincial Ministers who may be in a position to allocate funding to this project.

In April 2018, Nanaimo's Homelessness Coalition conducted a point-in-time census of homeless persons in our community, in concert with many other cities across the country. That census yielded 335 respondents who identified as homeless and normally reside in Nanaimo. This number represents a doubling of the homeless population since the most recent prior census of 174 homeless individuals in the winter of 2016.

While Nanaimo has pursued a strategy of distributing services and housing for low-income individuals throughout the community, many of our homeless residents congregate in the city centre on a daily basis. This visible and ongoing presence has a significant impact on our downtown, and there is no easy solution. Some emergency shelter options are available during the nighttime hours but most of Nanaimo's homeless do not have a place to go during the day. Consequently, they spend the daytime hours in the commercial and residential areas of the city centre.

As a result of this, we are noticing a deterioration in the relationship between the housed and un-housed in our community. Moreover, some long standing businesses are choosing to leave the downtown, citing this issue as the reason.

Nanaimo City Council believes that all citizens have the right to be in our public areas such as the downtown, and that homeless individuals, as citizens, enjoy that right as well. We also know that Bylaw Officers and RCMP members serving Nanaimo are frequently asked

to respond to public nuisance activities that do not rise to the level of criminality, to which they can only respond by encouraging the relevant individuals to move along. Lacking a place to move along to, our homeless citizens have been placed in an untenable situation. Moreover, the small geographic scope of the city centre means that enforcement personnel may engage with the same person several times a day at different locations which leads to frustration for all involved.

Nanaimo's Homeless Coalition has been aware of this dynamic for some time and has developed a five-year plan (2018-2023) to reduce homelessness in Nanaimo. One of the recommendations in that plan is to establish a daytime drop-in resource centre for people without a home. In support of this recommendation, Nanaimo City Council committed to a \$100,000 annual contribution towards the creation and operation of a daytime resource centre for homeless individuals. The intent is to provide an effective response to the issues identified above, but it is more than that: it also represents an opportunity to provide a range of harm reduction and wellness services to a vulnerable population.

The service framework for a drop-in space would include a core staffing function that would ensure that the space is safe for attendees and staff. It would also ensure that the area immediately adjacent to the centre is managed with respect to public safety and anti-social activities, and that the building and grounds are well maintained and functionally operational. In addition to this, the City would like to see offered in the proposed resource centre a range of supports including but not limited to:

- Shower program (currently provided by the City at a local sports field)
- Health supports such as wound treatment, foot care, and referrals
- Counselling and advocacy supports
- Individual wellness planning
- Housing placement programs
- Pre-employment skills training
- Support to apply for Income Assistance
- Clothing program (currently funded by the City through a non-profit organization)
- Laundry facilities
- Meal program (Nanaimo's free breakfast program currently operates from a City-owned building downtown)

Our vision for the Landing Pad, as we have called it, is to provide a safe space during the daytime gap that currently exist when all other services are closed (the breakfast club ends at 10 a.m. and the emergency shelter opens at 7 p.m.). We will work closely with all of our colleagues in the provincial Ministries and non-profit organizations to ensure that we achieve a well-balanced, supportive environment that complements existing services.

In discussion with staff from Victoria's resource centre, Our Place, it was made clear that appropriate staffing levels for Nanaimo's proposed daytime centre would require at least

three outreach workers and one maintenance personnel on the site each day. Based on the salary ranges typical for the field, we estimate it will cost at least \$400,000 per annum for staffing.

In addition to the above, there will be capital improvement costs, maintenance and repair costs, materials and supplies, leasehold payments and other operating expenditures. While we are still in search of a location, we estimate that the annual cost of the Landing Pad will be approximately \$650,000. As mentioned, our Council has committed \$100,000 towards this costs. We are seeking the support of the Provincial Government toward covering the balance of this amount.

We are happy to continue a dialogue with the relevant Provincial Ministries in order to align our objectives for this space with the respective mandates of those Ministries. We are hopeful for a positive response to our request.

Sincerely,

Mayor W. B. McKay
City of Nanaimo