

# Staff Report for Decision

DATE OF MEETING    OCTOBER 2, 2019

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**SUBJECT                DAYTIME RESOURCE CENTRE EXPRESSION OF INTEREST**

## **OVERVIEW**

### **Purpose of Report**

To provide information to the Health and Housing Task Force on options for expanded daytime resource centre services for community members who are homeless and street-involved in Nanaimo, and to request that the Task Force recommend that Council support the attached Expression of Interest.

### **Recommendation**

That the Health and Housing Task Force recommend that Council support the Expression of Interest for daytime resource centre services for community members who are homeless and street-involved in Nanaimo.

## **BACKGROUND**

The term 'daytime resource centre', as used in this report, refers to a place for people without stable housing to go during the daytime hours to access physical and mental health assistance, as well as to be sheltered from the elements. The intended user population includes community members experiencing homelessness as well as street-involved individuals, who are not necessarily homeless, but who are exposed to the physical, social, and emotional risks of spending significant time on the street.

As noted in Nanaimo's 2018 Action Plan to End Homelessness, the current system of services for homeless individuals in Nanaimo has an obvious gap in that there is no indoor shelter available during the day. This has a negative impact on both community members who are homeless and/or street-involved and the rest of the community, as individuals with nowhere else to go end up in public and semi-public spaces where they are neither welcome nor comfortable (e.g. business doorways). One of the strategies recommended in the Action Plan is to create a daytime drop-in resource centre.

At the Regular Council meeting on 2018-MAR-19, Council was provided with a range of potential municipal responses to address homelessness and issues related to individuals who are homeless and/or street-involved (needles, loitering on business property, public urination, etc.). One of the options proposed was for the City to explore partnerships with the goal of opening a daytime resource centre. In response to the 2018-MAR-19 report, Council passed a motion requesting that City Staff:

*“Pursue partnerships to provide a day time drop in resource centre for homeless individuals and that Council allocate \$100,000 per year towards a drop in resource centre in the 2018 budget cycle and proceed with determining potential locations for the resource centre and report back to Council.”*

The intent of the \$100,000 funding was to leverage additional funding and resources from other partners in order to provide an appropriate level of service to meet community needs for the provision of well managed daytime supports and services. Staff worked with community partners through the Nanaimo Homelessness Coalition to identify potential funding partners, locations, operators, and costs for a daytime centre in order to determine the scope of potential services and costs required for a safe and successful operation.

In addition to discussions with members organizations involved in the Nanaimo Homelessness Coalition and Island Health, Staff engaged in conversations with Our Place, a non-profit society based in Victoria. Our Place operates one of the largest drop-in centres for the homeless on Vancouver Island, as well as offering transitional housing, shelter space, and a therapeutic recovery centre. Our Place expressed interest in working with the City and other partners to open a new service centre in Nanaimo.

On 2019-MAR-04, Staff returned to Council with an update on efforts to partner with other governments and service providers to identify options for a new daytime resource centre. This staff report included information on the interest from Our Place, and committed Staff to returning to Council with options on service models and locations.

## **DISCUSSION**

Following the 2019-MAR-04 presentation to Council, Staff received input from some stakeholders and community members expressing one or both of the following opinions:

- 1) While there is general support for the expansion of daytime options for community members are homeless/street involved, many expressed hesitancy about creating a new “magnet” or “hot spot” location given the increase in drug use and the behaviours associated with acute addictions or opioid use of those who are street involved; and
- 2) Some expressed frustration that the City was considering partnering with a Victoria-based organization to open a new centre when there are local organizations that could potentially benefit from an opportunity to expand their existing support services currently offered to their clients who street involved and/ homeless.

Following consultation with local service providers, Staff determined that the most time-effective approach for distributing some the funding in 2019 would be for the City to issue a Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) outlining the services sought, and that responses to the EOI could include the development of a new service or the expansion of an existing service to fill a known gap. The latter would allow us to stretch our funding further by supplementing and augmenting existing community capacity, in the absence of an identified funding partner.

The wording of the EOI still allows the City to consider a new service if an organization can demonstrate that it has the ability to leverage the City’s investment to secure other public or private funding so that the service is adequately resourced. It would also enable the City to fund

more than one service expansion to meet the needs of multiple and discrete sub-communities within the homeless and street-involved population (e.g. homeless youth).

Should the Health and Housing Task Force choose to recommend that Council support the EOI as attached, the goal would be to issue the EOI immediately and award funding by November 2019 for an initial eight-month pilot period, with the potential for renewal subject to a six-month evaluation and Council approval. Alternatively, the Task Force may wish to hold off on recommending Council support the EOI in favour of renewed inter-governmental discussions on the potential for shared funding of a new resource centre. This would delay the project but may lead to more substantive investment from Provincial ministries overseeing health, housing, poverty reduction and substance use.

## **OPTIONS**

1. That the Health and Housing Task Force recommend that Council support the Expression of Interest for Daytime Resource Centre services for the homeless and street-involved in Nanaimo.
  - Proceeding with the Expression of Interest immediately would allow the City to move quickly to support existing services in the community, in advance of the oncoming wet winter weather.
  - The funding available solely through the City is unlikely to be able to support a new service, so most responses to the Expression of Interest will likely be for the expansion of existing services. This may mean that sections of the population who already have access to daytime services may get enhanced access, but those who currently are not served due to more challenging health related behaviours may still remain underserved during the daytime on the street.
  - \$100,000 per annum has been allocated in the 2018 and 2019 budget towards this project, and if no money is spent this year then we may not be able to continue to carry the money forward. The 2020 and 2021 budgets allocate \$100,000 per year for a daytime resource centre but no funding is currently budgeted beyond 2021.
2. That the Health and Housing Task Force not recommend Council support the attached Expression of Interest, but instead recommend that Council request a meeting between Mayor Leonard Krog and Ms. Sheila Malcolmson, MLA, to request financial support from the Provincial Government for a daytime resource centre for homeless and street-involved individuals in Nanaimo.
  - This is consistent with the approach that services for the homeless fall across the jurisdictions of health, housing and poverty reduction, and that a centre aimed at serving this clientele should be funded at least in part by the relevant government agencies.
  - This approach would take more time and may delay the project until next year, with no guarantee of obtaining any more funding than we have now.
  - Any future negotiations may result in the City being asked to contribute more than is currently committed to the project.

### **SUMMARY POINTS**

- Council has provided \$100,000 in the 2018 and 2019 budgets to pursue partnerships to provide a daytime drop-in resource centre for homeless individuals. If not allocated during 2019, there is a possibility that this money may not be carried forward. Additional annual funding of \$100,000 has been allocated for 2020 and 2021.
- Staff have prepared a Request for Expression of Interest (EOI) appropriate to the development of a new daytime resource centre or the expansion of an existing service to fill a known gap, and is seeking Task Force recommend Council support the EOI to proceed.
- Alternatively, the Task Force may wish to hold off on endorsing the EOI in favour of renewed inter-governmental discussions on the potential for shared funding of a new resource centre.

### **ATTACHMENTS:**

Attachment A: Request for Expression of Interest for Daytime Resource Centre Services in Nanaimo, BC |

#### **Submitted by:**

Lisa Bhopalsingh  
Manager, Community Planning |

#### **Concurrence by:**

Dale Lindsay  
General Manager, Development Services

Laura Mercer  
Director, Finance |