

MEMORANDUM

October 2, 2020

TO: Mayor and Council

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FROM: Sandra Singh, General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services

SUBJECT: Response to Council Motion: Emergency COVID-19 Relief for Unsheltered Vancouver Residents (RTS: 014069)

PURPOSE

This memo responds to the motion "Emergency COVID-19 Relief for Unsheltered Vancouver Residents," approved September 14, directing staff to report back on feasibility and costs to accelerate options for the creation of emergency housing for unsheltered homeless Vancouver residents during the COVID crisis.

Please note that due to the brief response time, all information in this memo should be viewed as preliminary and requiring further validation and due diligence, including the identification of potential properties for deployment.

BACKGROUND

Homelessness is a humanitarian crisis which continues to grow in our city and region. Incomes are not keeping pace with rising housing costs and residents are forced to compete in an overheated housing market with near zero vacancy rates. Homelessness has devastating consequences for the individual and is – at its simplest – the result of the compounding impacts of lack of affordable housing, deep poverty, and an insufficient mental health support system.

Often both driven and compounded by trauma, stigma, discrimination, unsupported mental health conditions, deep poverty, and racism, homelessness is a condition almost impossible to move from without public, social, and health supports or interventions.

Vancouver has experienced a steady growth in homelessness since starting the official homeless count in 2005. The most recent data on Vancouver's population of people experiencing homelessness can be found [here](#). The full results of the Vancouver's 2020 Homeless Count will be presented to Council Oct. 7th. People without adequate housing are forced to rely on friends or acquaintances for a place to sleep or the availability of a bed in an emergency shelter. Ultimately, if these alternatives are not available, they are forced to sleep outside in tents or other structures, usually in public spaces such as sidewalks and parks.

Important for our Canadian and local context, the over-representation of people of Indigenous ancestry experiencing homelessness in Vancouver reflects the continuing and intergenerational impacts of colonialism on Indigenous peoples. This over-representation clearly points to the need to decolonize the social, health, and other systems and programs that inform our lives, such as education, health care, government services, criminal justice, etc.

Intensifying the impacts of homelessness in Vancouver are the dual health crisis of the poisoned drug supply and COVID which have further impacted marginalized and at risk residents.

It is also important to note that a regional response to the homelessness is critical as are partnerships with senior government, public health, and community services. Staff are continuing to work with the government and agency partners on making homelessness *rare, brief and one-time* through Home Front. Home Front uses a collective impact approach and facilitates a shared commitment and coordinated set of actions engaging multiple partners across all levels of governments, as well as service providers, philanthropy, and business.

As noted above, Vancouver's current homeless crisis is a direct result of a historic lack of sufficient investment in supportive and affordable housing infrastructure, sufficient and appropriate health supports for people with mental health and addictions, and sufficient income supports for people living in deep poverty. While the City does not have the jurisdiction or responsibility for any of these services which rest with senior government, in recent years, the City has made significant investment (land and direct funding) to develop or incentivise the development of affordable and supportive housing, as well as the creation of interim crisis shelter spaces. In recent years, the Provincial government has also invested significantly in supportive housing through BC Housing and has made some important initial investments in improving income supports and shelter expansion. However, these welcome and appreciated investments alone cannot make up for years of insufficient funding and further funding and service innovation are required. Notably, in addition to supportive housing, funding is required to improve both social assistance (income supports) and to support those suffering from substance use, mental health, and brain injuries which are core issues that need to be addressed for any viable solution. Finally, without significant and meaningful Federal government investment and support, Vancouver and the region will continue to see people experiencing homelessness and suffer from the significant associated life safety risks.

While the investments needed to respond to the homelessness crisis are significant, the cost of doing nothing is greater – not only for the individual, but also for tax payers and broader community.

Direction from Council: Emergency COVID-19 Relief for Unsheltered Vancouver Residents (RTS: 014069)

On September 14, within the context of COVID and the increasing impacts of encampments in public spaces on both those sleeping in them and the surrounding neighbours, Council approved a motion directing staff to explore several options for an urgent response to residents experiencing unsheltered homelessness. The motion referenced the growing concern for safety of the people sleeping in Strathcona Park and other parks, as well as other public spaces. The full motion is attached in Appendix A.

The motion identifies several housing options Council wanted staff to explore, consultation requirements, as well as specific details regarding service solutions for integration in any approved solution.

Estimated Urgent and Immediate Need: 750 additional units/spaces/beds

Staff very roughly estimate the number of people sleeping outside in Vancouver to be 750 people. This estimate is based on the combination of the 2020 homeless count, recognition of the undercount, and a rough factor associated with the impacts as COVID including a reduction in shelter capacity due to physical distancing requirements and no-guest policies in SROs. The approach is detailed below:

- While the 2020 Homeless Count shows that growth in the total number of individuals experiencing homelessness in Vancouver has slowed over the last two years (2% between 2018 and 2019), the overall number of people experiencing homelessness continues to grow: the 2020 point-in-time (PiT) homeless count had the highest total since the count was first conducted in 2005, identifying 547 people who were unsheltered.
- Research by the US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) estimates that PiT counts undercount by roughly 20%. Applying this factor increases Vancouver's 2020 count of individuals sleeping rough/outside by 103 people to approximately 650 individuals.
- Staff also recognize that COVID has disproportionately impacted people experiencing homelessness and living in poverty. Loss of employment, reduction or closure of social services and drop in centres, and no guest policies in non-market SROs has collectively resulted in more people not having access to shelter and resources. While it is impossible to identify the number of people now sleeping rough due to these compounding COVID impacts, a very conservative estimate of an additional 100 people made homeless and without shelter.

Collectively, while very much a conservative estimate, these three factors suggest that as many as 750 Vancouver residents experiencing homelessness are sleeping outside and are in need of urgent solutions.

With regard to the encampment at Strathcona Park, there are currently approximately 380 tents in the park. While our Homelessness Services Outreach staff have not been able to do census of everyone in the park as they have done in the past, Portland Hotel Society (PHS) staff who are funded by BC Housing to support individuals in the encampment estimate there are roughly 200 people experiencing homelessness there.

While the above numbers are focused on the number of people sleeping outside due to homelessness, it is important to note that the 2020 Homeless Count identified an additional 1,548 people who are homeless sleeping in shelters which, while a necessary crisis intervention, are not an appropriate substitution for permanent housing.

Approach to Report Back

A cross departmental team assisted in the scoping of options to respond to Council's motion.

Given the timeline, the memo is only able to provide a high-level overview of options. Additional due diligence and site feasibility analysis will be required should staff be directed to pursue any or all of the options, as well as more detailed financial analysis based on those findings. The discussion of options in this memo includes:

- For each option: an overview of various models that exist, a high-level scan of site options and costs, as well as considerations associated with the option; and
- A ranking of the options based on variety of criteria, including cost, expediency, anticipated uptake, space attributes, likely partnership with senior government, and impact on the health and housing outcomes for individuals experiencing homelessness.

As per Council direction, the options considered vary broadly from permanent housing solutions to managed encampments wherein people continue to live outside in tents.

The City's long standing policy is to provide people experiencing homelessness with housing, income and other supports, with homeless shelters playing the role of providing an immediate interim emergency response to those living outside. Staff have not previously recommended many of the options contemplated in this memo because experience in other jurisdictions have shown them to be less effective, more difficult to manage, and more expensive to implement than providing housing. Further, the experiences of other jurisdictions have demonstrated that often well-intended short-term or interim solutions such as managed encampments generally become permanent encampments, effectively accepting rough sleeping or homelessness as part of the jurisdiction's housing continuum. However, staff also recognize that the ongoing COVID-19 pandemic has imposed an additional set of considerations related to infection prevention and control.

Staff would assert that any interim solution must provide for some individual choice, recognizing the underlying trauma experienced by many who are experiencing homelessness, and must lead to safe, secure and adequate housing as the ultimate goal. Without the foundation of adequate and secure housing, the ability to lead a healthy and fulfilling life is elusive.

STRATEGIC ANALYSIS

With the limited time available to respond to this motion, staff have reviewed potential City-owned properties, which are identified below, and have provided some considerations regarding potential private sites, most of which remain confidential.

As already noted above, it is important to note that all of the information below is preliminary and further due diligence and cost analysis is required. However, staff hope that there is sufficient information and analysis below for Council to consider which options they find most appropriate for further review and potential implementation.

Options Analysis

Option 1: Leasing or purchasing housing units including hotels, single-room occupancy residences, and other available housing stock

Model

While the pathways into homelessness are complex and multi-faceted, the solutions are straightforward: individuals need access to income, housing, and supports, including access to culture and other traditions. Research such as the Federal project *At Home/Chez Soi* has demonstrated that safe, secure, and affordable housing with supports as needed has the most positive health and housing outcomes for individuals.

The model of providing permanent homes is one that is well-developed at the City:

- The City has long-standing partnerships with senior government and non-profit housing providers to support the delivery of housing for individuals experiencing homelessness.
- The City's role has traditionally been to provide land, grants to non-profits, and advocacy to secure senior government funding commitments.
- Implementing the purchase or lease of additional housing would represent a significant financial challenge for the City absent funding partnerships with senior governments for both capital and ongoing operating.

Site Options and Associated Costs

Staff have done a review of available buildings. The table below outlines average current purchase prices and operating costs, as well as currently available units. Further considerations as options are reviewed include the following:

- It is important to note that in order to deliver housing for individuals experiencing homelessness, all of the capital investments outlined below require a commensurate commitment of operating funds to secure affordability and ensure adequate support services (est. \$38K per unit per year).
- It would be extremely challenging and not sustainable for the City of Vancouver to absorb these capital and operating costs within the Capital and Operating budgets without displacing other permanent housing investment contemplated in the Capital Plan, reducing other services across the City, or increasing property taxes significantly.
- Implementation of any option should be considered as contingent on a commitment from senior governments to contribute both capital and ongoing operational funding.

Finally, unit costs and availability estimates set out below are estimates and subject to material risk.

Type ¹	Purchase cost/door ²	Operating Costs/door/year ³	Estimated # of Units for Purchase ⁴	Total Purchase Costs	Total Annual Operating Costs
Commercial Hotels	\$400-\$750K	\$37,500	200	\$80m-\$150m	\$7.5m
Purpose Built Rentals (Rental 100)	\$500-\$600K	\$37,500	90	\$45m-\$54m	\$3.4m
Existing Vacant Apartment Buildings ⁵	\$600-700K	\$37,500	TBC	TBC	TBC
Total			290	\$125m-\$204m	\$10.9m

Opportunity

On September 21, the Federal government announced a \$1 billion new *Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI)* to help address the urgent housing needs of vulnerable Canadians. The initiative targets the creation of 3,000 new affordable housing units including the construction of modular housing, as well as the acquisition of land, and the conversion of existing buildings to affordable housing. Staff's understanding from speaking with CMHC staff is that the money needs to be allocated for purchase or renovation by March 2021 and the sites occupied/tenanted by March 2022. The tight timelines lend themselves toward the purchase of already available stock. Staff have identified some limited site options that would adhere to these timelines and will put forward a proposal for funding subject to Council's approval.

The Federal government also announced an additional \$236.7 million through *Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy* to help extend and expand the emergency response to the COVID-19 outbreak. This funding is in addition to the \$157.5 million announced in April 2020 to help communities address the immediate impacts of the pandemic on the individuals experiencing homelessness.

Securing Federal funding and building regional responses to homelessness to support the creation of new housing would have a significant impact on meeting the needs of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness. It is important to note that while this capital investment is good news, ongoing operating dollars and health support funding so that housing providers can effectively manage and operate sites will require further discussions with the Province.

¹ SROs are not included in this list but currently average \$230k/door to purchase. SROs may be longer term/less desirable solution given there are few vacant buildings for sale, and the tenanted buildings for sale provide congregate style housing, and would require additional renovations, and ongoing maintenance funding

² Additional funding may be required for renovations and tenant improvements

³ Based on BCH estimate of \$1.5M/year for 40 unit building.

⁴ Potentially available for acquisition, further due diligence required.

⁵ More research on apartment purchases is required. May not result in immediate new supply as some may be tenanted - could be transitioned over time to a new tenant population.

Additional considerations

- Securing additional temporary or long term housing options have positive health and housing outcomes for individuals experiencing homelessness. The research and the City's work with individuals experiencing homelessness consistently demonstrates that safe, secure and affordable housing, with connections to family, community and supports if needed is what people want.

A demonstration of this principle is looking at the housing retention of individuals that were transitioned to housing from the Oppenheimer Park decampment during the week of August 12 2019. One hundred and thirty-one people who were sleeping at Oppenheimer Park were offered, and accepted, and moved into accommodation through a coordinated outreach approach between the City of Vancouver's Homelessness Services Outreach Team and BC Housing. Accommodation was provided in a variety of City non-market and BC Housing supported stock, including 52 self-contained units, and 79 SRO rooms.

- In the course of their work, the Homelessness Services Outreach team conduct a 6, 12 and 24-month housing retention follow up. Since 2006, the housing retention after 12 months for Homelessness Services placements has been very close to 80%. Of those housed from Oppenheimer Park in August 2019, seven have sadly passed away, but 85% (106 people of the remaining 124) remain housed after the initial 12 month period.
- The investment required to support this option are significant. Dedicating resources is critical to leveraging necessary provincial funding to secure affordability and necessary supports to achieve the best outcomes for individuals experiencing homelessness.

Option 2: Establishing a Temporary Disaster Relief Shelter framework on a location or locations that may be vacant public or private land or structure; may be owned by the City of Vancouver; the Province of BC or the Federal Government; are not on designated or undesignated parkland (parks); are in general proximity to DTES; are serviceable for power, water, and related services; and can support appropriately physically distanced tents and services

Model

There are various models of encampments – some are informal while others are sanctioned by local governments and supported by social service organizations (“managed encampments”). There are numerous documented managed encampments across the US, including in Seattle and San Francisco, as well as closer to home in Victoria.

In Seattle, for example, the City sanctions and permits the encampments. Typically, these sanctioned sites often have high barriers to entry, such as no drugs or alcohol and individuals are allowed to sleep outside (either in tents or in small prefab structures such as a tiny home as outlined in option 4) on a longer term basis. The justification for sanctioning these sites is usually as a temporary stop-gap response to address increasing levels of street homelessness. While this may be the original intent, they rarely end up being a temporary measure, often resulting in low rates of occupants being housed, delayed closures, and high operating costs, all the while street homelessness continues to grow.

Consultation

Staff consulted with both people sleeping outside across the City as well as leadership of the current Strathcona encampment.

Feedback from Strathcona encampment leadership

Strathcona encampment leadership have expressed a preference for up to six smaller encampments versus one large encampment. They have described three types of encampments:

- a ‘mainstream or ‘no barrier’ encampment for people needing few supports and a quiet place to be⁶;
- a sober/family encampment; and
- a ‘low barrier’ encampment for people with mental health issues and active in their addiction.

The leadership asserts that there should be three of these encampment types that are Indigenous matriarch led/governed, peer-involved, community-supported, and government funded, and the remaining three encampments should be staffed in a more traditional way for settlers and others wanting that approach.

Consultation with people sleeping rough

Staff also surveyed people sleeping outside about the option of managed encampments.⁷ Between September 22 and 25, staff from the Homelessness Services Outreach Team conducted surveys with 83 unique individuals⁸ who were sleeping outside about their housing history, shelter usage, potential appeal of a managed encampment and what support services they would want:

- The majority of respondents (75% or 62 people) had concerns regarding personal safety and security when considering staying in a managed encampment.
- 22% (18 out of 46 people) who would consider staying in a managed encampment would do so only with some services and supports being provided including security, food, and showers (mentioned most often), and harm reduction supports, outreach supports to end their homelessness, electricity, storage, and garbage pick-up (mentioned less often).

Appendix B includes the results of the survey.

Site Options and Associated Costs

Staff have reviewed all available City-owned and identified some privately-owned vacant sites, parking lots, and parkades that could be potentially used for a Temporary Disaster Relief Shelter (TDRS).

Large sites option to accommodate a temporary relief shelter are limited. Options that have been explored but are not available:

- the future St. Paul’s Hospital site (Providence Health Care has advised construction is set to begin imminently);

⁶ While we have typically used the term “low or no” barrier to mean that there are no barriers to access for people suffering with mental health and additions, Strathcona leadership use the term to refer to people needing few supports and not facing issues with mental health and addiction.

⁷ PHS also recently conducted a survey of 100 individuals in the Strathcona encampment. BC Housing is analyzing the data and will share the results when completed.

⁸ The findings of our survey of individuals experiencing street homelessness echo much of the common narrative around shelters and encampments, however as a result of the small sample size, the results are not representative of the population as a whole.

- the parking lot adjacent to CRAB Park (the Port obtained an injunction to remove the previous encampment and is not in a position to offer the site for this purpose);
- Hastings Park and PNE (all sites/spaces under contract and booked)
Please note this site is subject to the guidelines of the Hastings Park Trust. Also, the PNE is under review for potential COVID response spaces.

The table below outlines the capital costs associated with available City-owned sites.

Type	Forgone revenue (Annual) ⁹	Square Footage	Encampment # of proposed residents	Sprung # of Proposed residents	Anticipated Servicing Costs
CoV-Owned Sites					
800 Quebec Lot ¹⁰	\$220,000	37,000 sq ft	Three 40-person	N/A Clearance	No Data Available
1500 Main St Lot ¹¹	\$200,000	25,840 sq ft	Two 40-Person	Two 25-30 person Sprung Shelters	\$6,175 (sewer only) + utilities
987 East Cordova St Lot ¹²	\$60,000	9,548 sq ft	One 40-person	One 25-person Sprung shelter	\$30,875 (sewer only)
2132 Ash St Lot (adjacent to existing TMH) ¹³	\$222,784	27, 848 sq ft	Two 40 person	Two – 25-30 person	Further info needed
Chinatown Parkade – 180 Keefer St ¹⁴ (6 floors)	\$150,000	200,000 sq ft	Up to Six 40 person	N/A	Further info needed
Parkade – 107 E. Cordova ¹⁵	\$110,000	70,000 sq ft	Up to Five 40 person	N/A	Further info needed
City Hall Lawn ¹⁶	TBD ¹⁷	~20,000 sq ft	Two 40-person	Two 25 person	Further info needed
Helena Gutteridge Lot (City Hall)	TBD ¹⁸	~20,000 sq ft	Two 40-person	Two 25 person	Further info needed
Non-COV Site					

⁹ These costs do not include remediation and repair of the site following its use for a temporary disaster relief shelter.

¹⁰ Further due diligence required – Seismic issues

¹¹ Further due diligence required – Sewer mains available in the easement; no foreseen servicing issues for utilities; provincial heritage?

¹² Further due diligence required – Backs onto CN Railway track; further details required for Utilities costing, which is not included here; Site can only accommodate up to 25 single residents based on site size

¹³ Further due diligence required – Archaeological issues

¹⁴ Further due diligence required: Parkade is 6 storeys, and open on the side (Fall risks)

¹⁵ Further due diligence required: Parkade is 6 storeys, 5 are fully parking, 1st floor is half office space.

¹⁶ Further due diligence required : Weight Load baring for a Tent structure

¹⁷ Further information required to assess Forgone Rent

¹⁸ Further information required to assess Forgone Rent

Type	Forgone revenue (Annual) ⁹	Square Footage	Encampment # of proposed residents	Sprung # of Proposed residents	Anticipated Servicing Costs
No site identified but based on market rent on empty lots - Non COV-site (rental)	Anticipated Annual Cost \$60,000-\$80,000	10,000 sq ft	One 40 person	One 25 person	N/A
			720 Spots	225-245 spots	

Note: Chinatown and 107 E Cordova Parkades: These will have significant challenges with regards to parking agreements for adjacent developments, possible seismic concerns, etc. Generally staff do not recommend any parkades. Other parkades that were considered all have underground components or daycares and fire/safety challenges.

Staff also undertook further analysis on estimating operating cost. The table below outlines estimated operating costs for three shelter models:

1. *Self-governed*: Community organizer or encampment members coalition operates and manages encampment with little to no government involvement
2. *Partially Supported*: Community organizer or encampment members coalition operate and manage encampment with some added supports from government but little to no oversight.
3. *Fully Managed*: Operated like an emergency homeless shelter with 24/7 staff and supports

MODEL	40 TENT ENCAMPMENT ¹⁹			SPRUNG SHELTER
	Self-governed	Supported	Managed	Managed
Ongoing annual operations*	\$371K Includes minimal security in area outside encampment No paid on site staff	\$1.8M Includes 24/7 security in and around the encampment Daytime staff - 7 days	\$2.3M 24/7 security in and around the encampment Staff 24/7	\$1.5M No additional security needs outside of regular staffing Staff 24/7
VPD and VFRS	TBC	TBC	TBC	TBC
Vancouver Coastal Health		\$333K	\$333K	\$333K
TOTAL Annual Operations*		\$2.1M+	\$2.6M+	\$1.8M+
Set-up/ Construction*	\$132K	\$132K	\$132K	\$4M

*All costs estimated

¹⁹ 40 tents on 10,000 sq ft lot Based on:

- 200 sq ft per tent (10'x10' tent/platform + 10 foot buffer)
- 1200 sq ft for bathroom/shower trailers (includes buffer and ramp)
- 800 sq ft for communal warming tent

Considerations

Sprung shelters have been used in many American cities, as well as in Toronto. These large tension fabric structures have been used as temporary shelters and as COVID response shelters. In consultation with Vancouver Coastal Health, the recommendation is that, during COVID, single tents are preferred over congregate settings. Further, any disaster relief shelter should include an isolation area and sufficient washrooms in order that they could be dedicated to clusters of shelter occupants.

Vancouver's experience of informally managed encampments has demonstrated increasing challenges related to safety for individuals sleeping at the encampment and neighbouring residents. As noted in the chart, costs above do not factor in VPD and VFRS costs.

Council also directed staff to consider how the implementation of options, including the temporary disaster relief shelter, could facilitate decampments in Vancouver Parks, including Strathcona Park. BC Housing is funding PHS to provide support to individuals at the Strathcona encampment and the Homelessness Services Team Outreach staff also continue to work with individuals in and outside of the encampment to provide offers of shelter and housing as they become available. Continued dialogue and engagement with leadership and individuals staying in the Strathcona encampment is important to the implementation of this option. However, even with the activation of additional options being considered in this memo, the likelihood of decamping Strathcona Park without enforcement of the newly amended Park Control By-law is limited as not everyone in the Park would choose one of the created options.

While any commitment from the Provincial government is not possible due the election period, to date they have not supported the concept of a managed encampment, seeing a managed encampment as only appropriate as an interim measure during a decampment process that connects people to indoor spaces.

Option 3: Temporarily converting City-owned buildings excluding community centres or childcare and daycare into emergency housing or shelter space.

Model

This option is consistent with the City's role in partnering with BC Housing to provide additional temporary shelter capacity during the winter months, as well as activating Emergency Response Centres in response to COVID.

Current Implementation

There will be 10 temporary shelters in operation by the end of October 2020 in three City-owned buildings.

- Historically, the City provides a site (either City-owned, or leased) carries out necessary tenant improvements and BC Housing provides operating funding to a non-profit to manage and operate the shelter.
- These shelters are typically low-barrier, meaning individuals can shelter with their loved ones including pets, have storage for their belongings and shopping carts and have access to harm reduction and OPS services.
- These shelters also generally provide 24/7 staff support, meals and laundry services, as well as connections to health and other housing supports.

Staff are working with BC Housing, Vancouver Coastal Health, and Kílala Lelum (Urban Indigenous Health and Healing Cooperative) on launching a 60 bed Navigation Centre, targeted to be open in spring 2021. This made-in-Vancouver enhanced shelter model will be

referral-only and will provide integrated clinical health supports, as well as culturally appropriate services for Indigenous peoples. Site options are being finalized and staff will update Council as a site is confirmed.

In addition, the City is working with BC Housing to secure an additional 60 bed temporary shelter, as well as an Emergency Response Centre to support people who are unsheltered during the COVID second wave.

Site Options and Associated Costs

Staff have scanned all available City-owned sites that could be renovated to be suitable for emergency housing or shelter and have confirmed that the options are limited. This is not surprising given staff have been actively working over the past year to identify City-owned and other sites for a potential shelter and Navigation Centre.

The table below identifies the potential sites and outlines a total of approximately \$300,000 one-time costs for Tenant Improvements per site and an ongoing annual and revenue loss cost of \$500,000 for an estimated 40-60 bed shelter in an identified City-owned site as REFM is required to collect market rent on Property Endowment Fund (PEF) sites as per the PEF Policy. It should be noted that the PEF returns an annual dividend to the City that funds ongoing City operations so revenue loss in the PEF has a material impact on City operating revenues.

Type	Tenant Improvements COV Cost (One Time)	Square Footage	Forgone revenue COV Cost (Annual)	Operating BCH* (Annual)	Operating OPS-VCH Cost ²⁰ (Annual)	VCH Cost Clinical services ²¹ (Annual)	Total Overall Costs ²² for 40 beds (Annual)
875 Terminal	\$300,000	22,000 sq ft	\$500,000	\$1.5m	\$50,000	\$333,320	\$1.9m
Kingsway Continental Pub (4000 sq ft) area plus an outdoor parking lot ²³ <i>Space for 20 beds only inside + 20 outdoor option</i>	\$250,000	4000 sq ft Pub + Parking Lot for Outside option (Tent/Britco/Encampment)	\$125,000	\$1.5m	\$50,000	\$333,320	\$1.9m
2400 Hotel ²⁴	Minimal	63 units	\$650,000	\$1.5m	\$50,000	\$333,320	\$1.9m

²⁰ VCH supplied OPS operating - \$50,000 for approximately 100 residents per year

²¹ VCH supplied Health services - \$8,333 per person per year

²² Cost incurred by COV, BCH and VCH (not all COV costs)

²³ Further due diligence required: Breach of lease for removal of tenant parking outlined in lease

²⁴ Six month termination provision notice required for existing management services contract

Assumptions for Costing above:

- *BCH Supplied Operating Funding Dollar amount based on 40-50 residents*
- *VCH supplied Clinical Services Dollar amount - \$8333 per person per year*
- *VCH Supplied OPS Operating Costs - \$50,000 per year for ~100 people*
- *City of Toronto estimated cost per 10,000 sq foot facility/site that houses 50 people during COVID : \$4 million*

Consideration

- Shelters are an emergency response and some individuals experiencing homelessness are reluctant to or refuse to access shelters citing reasons such as disliking shelters (17%), not feeling safe (11%), not being able to stay with a friend (11%), and being turned away (9%).²⁵ Despite these concerns, 60% of respondents in the 2020 count reported they had accessed shelters in the last 12 months.
- Providing indoor locations for individuals to be connected with supports and services is more effective than delivering these services outdoors.
- New shelters should be designed and operated using a trauma informed approach to ensure they are welcoming and safe.
- As in the other options being considered in this memo, non-profit shelter and housing providers are also facing staffing and resources challenges as a result of COVID. Operationalizing one or more of these sites will require an operator and dedicated resources and supports from BCH and VCH.

Option 4: Establishing temporary tiny house villages (THV) on vacant public or private land

Model

Many American cities have embraced THV in their responses to homelessness. Origin stories of these programs are focus on systematic issues in social welfare, lack of transitional housing units, and the inability of the shelter system to accommodate everyone in need (e.g. couples, etc.). The model is intended to rapidly move people from the shelter system or living rough to a THV before finding permanent housing. The effectiveness of achieving this objective has mixed reviews. As with emergency relief shelters or managed encampments, these temporary measures are rarely temporary as intended and the lack of other options result in very limited positive housing outcomes for people.

Various THV models exist in the US including the use of land leases, City contracts that are renewed on short terms (less than 5 yrs), and informal agreements with private home owners and churches. Operating models include self-governance frameworks and co-op model of governing. Predominantly, these villages are high-barrier with strict code of conducts (no drugs or alcohol) and can include probationary period agreements.

As a Canadian example, in Calgary, AB an organization called the Charity has land (owned or leased) and constructs tiny homes. The residents are provided with wrap-around services provided by the Charity. In one US-based program in California, the habitat for humanity sweat equity / sweat property maintenance model is used and residents' costs per month range from \$30 to \$450 per unit per month USD.

²⁵ From the 2019 Homeless Count (question not included in the 2020 Metro Count)

The THV concept has been promoted by local Vancouver builders and academics²⁶ and has recently been the focus in local media including in *The Tyee*. Local proponents have modeled options that include use of a typical Vancouver 33sf by 122sf single family vacant lot (could accommodate 10 sleeping pods) to using larger sites pending redevelopment to accommodate a village of sleeping pods. Other site options could include working with the faith-based community to explore the use of church parking lots for 3-5 pods support people sleeping outside to access shelter and community via the church.

In speaking with local proponents, the sleeping pods can be built to varying specs. They range from a 100sf shed like structure with no heat, power or water, with shared bathrooms and kitchens provided separately in the ‘village’. Or the pods can be larger (200sf) and self-contained units with their own bathroom and cooking facilities.

Access to a private bathroom is not only important for one’s dignity but also to mitigate the spread of COVID. A sleeping pod with heat, power, a private bathroom and microwave should be considered minimum standard if this model was advanced in Vancouver.

Site Options and Associated Costs

Similar to the Emergency Response Shelter option, sites options to accommodate THV are limited. While working with faith-based partners to establish smaller scale villages on their parking lots may be a first step, staff have identified some site options and estimated costs.

Type	Forgone revenue (Annual)	Square Footage	Proposed number of 200 sq. foot Tiny Homes	Anticipated Serving Costs
COV-Owned Sites				
800 Quebec Lot ²⁷	\$220,000	37,000 sq. ft.	~ 40	No Data Available
1500 Main St Lot ²⁸	\$200,000	25,840 sq. ft.	~ 32	\$6,175 (sewer only) + utilities
987 East Cordova St Lot ²⁹	\$60,000	9,548 sq. ft.	~10	\$30,875 (sewer only)
2132 Ash St Lot (adjacent to existing TMH ³⁰)	\$222,784	27, 848 sq ft	~33	Further info needed
Chinatown Parkade ³¹ 180 Keefer St ³² (6 flrs)	\$150,000	200,000 sq ft	Unsure on clearance	Further info needed

²⁶ Patrick Condon, Scot Hein (both with the UBC School of Architecture and Landscape Architecture) and Bryn Davidson (Lanefab Design /Build)

²⁷ Further due diligence required – Seismic issues

²⁸ Further due diligence required – Sewer mains available in the easement; no foreseen servicing issues for utilities; provincial heritage?

²⁹ Further due diligence required – Railway; Utilities costing

³⁰ Further due diligence required – Archaeological issues

³¹ Chinatown and 107 E Cordova Parkades: These will have significant challenges with regards to parking agreements for adjacent developments, possible seismic concerns, etc. Generally, staff do not recommend any parkades. Other parkades that were considered all have underground components or daycares and fire/safety challenges

³² Further due diligence required: Parkade is 6 storeys, and open on the side (Fall risks)

Type	Forgone revenue (Annual)	Square Footage	Proposed number of 200 sq. foot Tiny Homes	Anticipated Serving Costs
Parkade ³³ 107 E. Cordova ³⁴	\$110,000	70,000 sq ft	Unsure on clearance	Further info needed
City Hall Lawn ³⁵	TBD ³⁶	~20,000 sq. ft.	~25	Further info needed
Helena Gutteridge Lot	TBD ³⁷	~20,000 sq. ft.	~25	Further info needed
Non-COV Site				
No site identified but based on market rent on empty lots - Non COV-site (rental)	Anticipated Cost \$60,000- \$80,000	10,000 sq. ft.		N/A
			165 units	

Notes on above table:

Standard Vancouver Lot Size = 33 X122 = 4,026 sq. feet – accommodate ten (10) homes @ 100 sq. feet

Standard Vancouver Lot Size = 33 X122 = 4,026 sq. feet – accommodate 5 (homes) @ 200 sq. feet

2 Standard Lots = 8,000 sq. foot Accommodate twenty two (22) @ 100 sq. foot sleeping spaces

2 Standard Lots = 8,000 sq. foot - Accommodate ten (10) @ 200 sq. foot sleeping spaces

The following table outlines Tiny Home Models and costs:

Type	Sleeping Pod Only (ventilation, lights and heat)	Self-contained Tiny home (kitchen and washroom)	Tiny Home Village Shower/washroom trailer	Tiny Village Kitchen trailer
Size (sf)/# people accommodated	100 sq. ft. (with 50sf loft)/1-2 people	200 sq. ft./1-2 people	10X25 (1200 sq. ft.)	10X25 (1200 sq. ft.)
Cost/unit (serviced)	\$40,000	\$80,000	\$50,000	Further Details required ³⁸
Site Servicing	\$20,000	\$20,000	Further Details Required for Tiny Village	Further Details Required
Site Prep	\$20,000	\$20,000	Further Details Required for Tiny Village	Further Details Required
Operating (Annual)	Further Details Required	Further Details Required	Further Details Required for Tiny Village	Further Details Required
Total Cost	\$80,000³⁹	\$120,000⁴⁰		

³³ Chinatown and 107 E Cordova Parkades: These will have significant challenges with regards to parking agreements for adjacent developments, possible seismic concerns, etc. Generally, staff do not recommend any parkades. Other parkades that were considered all have underground components or daycares and fire/safety challenges

³⁴ Further due diligence required – Parkade is 6 storeys, with offices on half of first floor

³⁵ Further due diligence required: Weight Load bearing for a Tent structure

³⁶ Further information required to assess Forgone Rent

³⁷ Further information required to assess Forgone Rent

³⁸ Further Due Diligence required: VFRS needs to be involved

³⁹ Further info on Shower Trailers, Washrooms needed to determine operating costs

⁴⁰ Costs estimates from VAHEF

Further site specific due diligence would be required and costs may change (including revenue loss if situated on a City-owned parking lot), as well as installing, operating washroom trailers, shower trailers, and kitchen trailers as required.

Considerations

There are a number of land use and building by-law considerations in moving such an option forward:

- Tiny homes are not a listed use under our current regulations. Micro dwellings, laneways and infills are listed uses under our zoning and development by-law, and must comply with regulations including minimum unit size, height, use, site coverage and FSR.
- Considering amendments to allow tiny homes under our existing regulations will require a longer term process, including thoughtful planning and consultation and considerable research.

To implement this option in the short term, the City may consider treating tiny homes as an RV or trailer (already allowed by the Province) built under RV standards which considerably simplifies power, water and sewer connections which could follow RV requirements. Fire would also recommend the addition of a sprinkler system which is a relatively simple change that can connect to the existing water connection.

Both the BC Building Code and the Vancouver Building Bylaw are not suitable to apply to tiny homes, which are more closely aligned with RVs and Caravans due to the confined spaces involved and more transient nature of the use. The building bylaw does allow shed like structures less than 100 sf which do not require a building permit; however these are accessory structures only for storage etc. and are not suitable for habitation. Given the residential/sleeping use of these tiny homes, ensuring the life safety of occupants (low flame spread materials, sprinklers, smoke alarms and other safety measures) and at a minimum having heat, ventilation, power and preferably a private bathroom are important. Options such as the prebuilt trailers and similar buildings which are built to a Canadian residential building code standard and meet health and safety requirements appear to be a more livable and cost effective option and could be temporarily approved for use in Vancouver but with a sprinkler system added. Sprinkler systems continue to provide an exemplary fire safety benefit and were first mandated in 1973 to protect the occupants of SRO buildings in Vancouver following a significant number of fire deaths

A key challenge in all of the options being considered in this memo is identifying suitable sites:

- Given Vancouver is hemmed in by mountains and the ocean, there is no option for horizontal sprawl as occurs in other major cities which makes THV easier to implement. Any of these structures need to be located safe distances from other buildings and each other but also have access to utilities making them inefficient in terms of density. Because of our very limited land base in Vancouver, the City has traditionally sought to maximize density on all potential multi-unit housing sites, even sites for temporary housing in order to house as many people as reasonably as possible. For example, the Temporary Modular Housing (TMH) initiative has delivered over 600 units of self-contained supportive housing. TMH presents the highest, most economical and best use of limited land available for temporary housing options for larger sites.

- Subject to zoning and building by-law changes to permit tiny homes as RVs or trailers, or putting a tiny home on wheels, identifying smaller sites such as church parking lots could be a viable option for a smaller number of units.

Option 5: Providing a serviced space or spaces for low income RV residents

Model

There has been a proliferation of RVs parked on Vancouver streets over recent years. Some people live in an RV to save rent while others choose RV living to travel/vacation upon retirement. Finally, for some it is because they have no other options and the loss of a vehicle is the final step before chronic homelessness. The 2020 Homeless Count identified 34 respondents who were sleeping in vehicles (included car, RV, truck, boat). The City’s parking enforcement team report that over the last month and a half, based on complaints, they have counted roughly 87 unique RVs in clusters (RVs parked alone or not subject to a complaint are not included in this number). In short, staff do not have a good understanding of the types of RV dwellers in the city and their specific circumstances. Attempts to engage with this community by the Homelessness Outreach Team have been largely unsuccessful.

Many American cities have grappled with the issue of RVs over the years. Some big box stores such as Walmart have at times allowed overnight camping in their parking lots. The program was aimed at travellers/vacationers who also made purchases at the store before traveling on. The number of participating stores has dropped as RV encampments became more common place and neighbour concerns related to homelessness increased.

Many American cities are instead now focusing on safe parking programs targeted to people living in their cars (as opposed to RVs). The rationale for this focus is that people living in their cars are more motivated to take offers of housing and support than people living in an RV.

Seattle created a designated area for RV parking for individuals with no other options. They have not been able to accommodate all RVs and have cancelled the program because they are expensive, failed to get many people housed, and RV residents faced serious health and safety challenges.

Sites Options and Associated Costs

Finding a site large enough to accommodate all RVs in Vancouver would be challenging so a number of smaller sites may be an option. The table below outlines the costs associated with available City-owned sites noting that servicing and operating costs would still need to be confirmed. Potential sites are identified in the table below:

Type	Forgone revenue (Annual)	Square Footage	# of proposed RVs or Cars	Anticipated Servicing Costs
CoV-Owned Sites				
800 Quebec Lot ⁴¹	\$220,000	37,000 sq ft	TBC	No Data Available
1500 Main St Lot ⁴²	\$200,000	25,840 sq ft	TBC	\$6,175 (sewer only) + utilities
987 East Cordova St Lot ⁴³	\$60,000	9,548 sq ft	TBC	\$30,875 (sewer only)
2132 Ash St Lot (adjacent to existing TMH ⁴⁴)	\$222,784	27, 848	TBC	Further info needed
Chinatown Parkade – 180 Keefer St ⁴⁵ (6 floors)	\$150,000	200,000	TBC	Further info needed
Parkade 107 E. Cordova ⁴⁶	\$110,000	70,000 sq ft	Unsure on clearance	Further info needed
Non-COV Site				
No site identified but based on market rent on empty lots - Non COV-site (rental)	Anticipated Annual Cost \$60,000- \$80,000	10,000 sq ft	TBC	N/A
			TBC	

Note: Chinatown and 107 E Cordova Parkades: These will have significant challenges with regards to parking agreements for adjacent developments, possible seismic concerns, etc. Generally staff do not recommend any parkades. Other parkades that were considered all have underground components or daycares and fire/safety challenges

Considerations

- Large vehicles, such as RVs and campers, are not permitted to be parked on any Vancouver street between the hours of 10:00pm and 6:00am and may not be parked longer than 3 hours between the hours of 6:00am and 10:00pm.
- Vehicles parked in the contravention of this by-law may be ticketed and impounded at the owner's expense.
- Providing an RV parking site that is managed and serviced would provide owners with an alternative to being parked illegally.
- Should this option be pursued, further consideration should be given to the target population. As noted above, many US cities are now creating safe parking programs which are targeted to people living in their cars (as opposed to RVs). The rationale is

⁴¹ Further due diligence required – Seismic issues

⁴² Further due diligence required – Sewer mains available in the easement; no foreseen servicing issues for utilities; provincial heritage?

⁴³ Further due diligence required – Backs onto CN Railway track; further details required for Utilities costing, which is not included here; Site can only accommodate up to 25 single residents based on site size

⁴⁴ Further due diligence required – Archaeological issues

⁴⁵ Further due diligence required: Parkade is 6 storeys, and open on the side (Fall risks)

⁴⁶ Further due diligence required – Parkade is 6 storeys, with offices on half of first floor

that people living in their cars are more motivated to take offers of housing and support.

Options Summary and Next Steps

The table below summarizes the targeted units/rooms/beds/spaces and considerations for each option and assesses each on the basis of the following considerations:

- *Cost effectiveness*: based on overall capital and operating costs in relation to health and housing outcomes
- *Take-up*: likelihood of take-up by people that are currently unsheltered considering personal choice, location/proximity to preferred neighbourhood, incentive to stay in place
- *Space attributes*: appropriateness considering infection control, hygiene, spacing, accessibility, safety
- *Expediency*: availability of the site/building
- *Impact*: housing and health outcomes associated with the option
- *Partner support*: Does the model reflect past partnership models or do staff have some sense of potential likelihood of support. (Likely = follows existing partnership model)

Option	Cost effectiveness*	Take Up**	Space Attributes***	Expediency	Impact	Partner Support
Lease/purchase vacant apartment building	High	High	High	High	High	Likely
Lease/purchase vacant apartment commercial hotel	High	High	High	High	High	Likely
Lease/purchase vacant SRO****	Medium	Medium	Low	High	High	Likely
Temporary Disaster Relief Shelter	Low	Medium	Low	Medium	Low	Low
Converting City-owned building to temporary shelter	Medium	Medium	Low	Medium	Medium	Likely
Tiny Home (sleeping pod with bathroom)	Low	High	Medium	Low	Medium	Low
RV Park	Low	Medium	Medium	Medium	Medium	Low

**While cost should not necessarily be the driver in a response to a humanitarian crisis such as this, the City has limited funds to invest in housing options and staff recommend consideration that any funds spent on interim measures are not available to deploy for permanent housing solutions.*

***Subject to confirmation through site specific consultation*

****Congregate settings are less preferred options*

***** SROs would likely require time to operationalize, a more significant investment (Tis) and on-going costs to maintain and operate*

Should Council move forward with any or all of the options discussed in this report back, additional work is required including:

- Securing partnerships and funding from senior government and identifying funding source for City contributions;
- Carrying out due diligence on sites, including consultation with City departments, VPD, Fire, to explore options to proactively reduce any ancillary camping, litter, disorder,

criminal activity or other impacts within a 300 metre of each site and to improve integration with adjacent businesses and residents

- Engage people living in encampments such as Strathcona Park on implementation; and
- Finalizing an operating model for each option/site including the intake and referral process; required services and supports, rules and standards of operation to ensure safety, security, respect and dignity for residents.

Further, in addition to any regulatory related consultation that would need to be carried out in relation to any of the proposed options, a robust community engagement plan would also be developed in order to engage neighbours early on in the process.

Depending on the model or models identified, work would be done in coordination with the BC Housing and VCH should they be in a position to partner on any of the options being implemented. Staff would also continue proactively address impacts to adjacent businesses and residents and monitor impacts and integration and the health and housing outcomes for individuals and report back to Council accordingly.

As noted in an earlier section, during the election period, the Province and BC Housing will be unable to make any commitments to partner in solutions. Discussions with the Federal Government regarding RHI and other funding commitments can continue.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

The table below provides a summary of costs outlined for each option (more detailed information is provided in the tables in each option above). The costs vary depending on the size and model being proposed, but all are significant and will require capital and operating funding commitment from senior governments. It would be extremely challenging and not sustainable for the City to take any of these options on alone given the limited capital and operating funding the City could deploy without displacing permanent housing investments already contemplated in the Capital Plan, service reductions across the City, or the need for significant tax increases.

Type	Forgone revenue (Annual)	Purchase Cost	Tenant Improvements ⁴⁷	Operating ⁴⁸ (Annual)
CoV-Owned Sites				
Option 1: Purchase hotels, apartment buildings (290 units ⁴⁹)	N/A	\$125m-204m	TBC	\$10.9m ⁵⁰
Option 2: Emergency Relief Shelter (8 potential sites)	\$963k	N/A	\$100k-\$4m (sprung shelter)	\$1.8m ⁵¹
Option3: Convert CoV building into shelter/housing (3 buildings, 143 spaces/units)	\$1.275m	N/A	\$550K	\$5.4m ⁵²
Option 4: Tiny Home Village	\$963k	\$80k-\$120k/house	TBC	TBC
Option 5: RV Park	\$963k	TBC	TBC	TBC
Non-COV Site				
No site identified but based on market rent on empty lots - Non COV-site (rental) for Options	Anticipated Annual Cost \$60,000- \$80,000 ⁵³	N/A	TBC	TBC
TOTAL				

Senior Government Leadership and Support

Providing social housing and emergency shelter and homelessness services is primarily the responsibility of senior governments. In recent years, both Federal and Provincial governments have introduced funding programs for creating and sustaining affordable housing and investing in urgent homelessness interventions including the purchase and lease of a number of hotels in Vancouver. During the first wave of COVID, BC Housing leased significant property in Vancouver and across the Province for emergency shelter, announced a 300-unit permanent modular housing program with Vancouver, and an additional 100 temporary modular housing units. Recently, the Federal government announced its RHI initiative and expansion of Reaching Home to respond to COVID as described in Option 1 and staff are in discussions with regard to potential funding allocations to Vancouver.

⁴⁷ Additional site servicing costs TBC

⁴⁸ Based on estimates provided by BCH and VCH

⁴⁹ Based on current units for purchase – please note the caveats outlined in Option 1 above

⁵⁰ For 290 units

⁵¹ Per 40 spots/tents

⁵² Per site

⁵³ For ~10,000 sq ft

The City welcomes these partnerships and new programs since in the absence of senior government support the City alone will not be able to sustain and grow the affordable housing portfolio over the long term or respond to homelessness in the short term.

The City is actively exploring strategic partnerships with other levels of government to deliver much-needed longer term affordable and supportive housing through various means, including funding for capital and operating costs in new affordable housing; financing to support affordable housing construction; and legislative changes to enable new municipal housing and land use initiatives. Having a sustainable partnership and funding arrangement with senior governments would substantially enable new affordable housing supply as well as the much needed building repairs for all co-op and non-market housing on City land. The City uses a variety of enabling tools to leverage affordable housing in partnership with senior governments and private and/or non-profit housing partners:

- *Contributions through Development* – As part of market residential and/or mixed use development, there may be opportunities to secure “turn-key” non-market housing to the City through voluntary community amenity contributions and/or inclusionary zoning policies. Non-profit housing partners can be selected to operate and maintain the housing projects at prescribed affordability over the lease term (usually 60 years).
- *City Land Contributions* – The City leverages long term land leases to housing partners at below market rent for 60 years or longer for the purpose of creating new affordable housing. Partners may be involved solely in operating non-market housing or may undertake the comprehensive development and long term operational responsibility, depending on the nature of the partnership with the City.
- *Capital Grants* – The City allocates grants to non-profit partners to enhance viability and affordability of their non-market housing projects with a focus on shelter rate and HILs units.
- *Development Cost Levies (DCLs) Waivers/Exemptions* – Social housing projects are exempt from DCLs. Rental projects may qualify for DCL waiver if the development meets the various criteria for “for-profit affordable rental housing” under the applicable DCL By-law.
- *Property Tax Exemptions* – Supportive housing, if designated by the Province as a Class 3 property, is subject to special valuation rules that reduce the assessed value to a nominal amount and are effectively exempt from property taxes.
- *Temporary Shelter Program* – The City contributes capital funding to lease and renovation costs in order to create additional shelter capacity by opening new temporary shelters

Consistent with Council policies, affordable housing is expected to be self-sustaining over the long term where rents are set at levels that will cover mortgage payments (to repay some or all of the construction costs), operating costs and capital replacement; and do not require further operating subsidies, property tax exemptions, and/or financial guarantees from the City. To fully achieve the Housing Vancouver income targets and the necessary level of affordability, as well as to address the unprecedented homelessness in Vancouver, the City will need capital and operating funding commitment from BC Housing, CMHC, and/or non-profit and partner equity contributions.

While the City has a long standing partnership with regards to delivery of shelters and housing, to date there has been no indication of support for Tiny Homes or managed encampments.

At this juncture, it is also important to note that Provincial government staff are not able to indicate any position on matters arising during the election period.

FINAL REMARKS

Should Council direct staff to pursue any of the options described above, further due diligence will be required to determine site viability and feasibility. Staff would report back on these options, as well as the ability to secure government support and funding commitments, before moving ahead with implementation.

If Council has any further questions or needs additional information, please feel free to contact Sandra Singh directly at sandra.singh@vancouver.ca.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Sandra Singh". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Sandra Singh
General Manager, Arts, Culture and Community Services

604.871.6858 | sandra.singh@vancouver.ca

APPENDIX A

Motion: Emergency COVID-19 Relief for Unsheltered Vancouver Residents (RTS: 014069)
Approve September 14, 2020

- A. Council recognizes that the Homelessness Emergency is a complex challenge requiring solutions from all orders of government, First Nations, businesses, community organizations and individuals; and temporary shelters for people experiencing homelessness are not the solution, but that the immediate concerns around public realm, safety and unsheltered individuals must be addressed by the City;
- i. City Staff report back to Council by or before October 2 on the feasibility and costs of the following options to accelerate the creation of emergency housing for homeless Vancouver residents:
 1. Option 1: Leasing or purchasing housing units including hotels, single-room occupancy residences, and other available housing stock;
 2. Option 2: Establishing a Temporary Disaster Relief Shelter framework on a location or locations that may be vacant public or private land or structure; may be owned by the City of Vancouver; the Province of BC or the Federal Government; are not on designated or undesignated parkland (parks); are in general proximity to DTES; are serviceable for power, water, and related services; and can support appropriately physically distanced tents and services;
 3. Option 3: Temporarily converting City-owned buildings excluding community centres or childcare and daycare into emergency housing or shelter space;
 4. Option 4: Establishing temporary tiny house villages on vacant public or private land;
 5. Option 5: Providing a serviced space or spaces for low income RV residents;
 - ii. AND FURTHER THAT staff consider how all of the above options could:
 1. Facilitate decampments in Vancouver Parks in consultation with the Vancouver Park Board, and specifically Strathcona Park, and other public spaces, such as sidewalks and alleys;
 2. Be reviewed by Council within an appropriate time frame to determine how this temporary option can be wound down;
 3. Facilitate work with BC Housing and Vancouver Coastal Health to develop an intake and referral process that addressed most critical unsheltered needs; rules and standards of operation; best practice maximum limit of individuals; and conditions of residence that ensure safety, security, respect and dignity for all;
 4. Facilitate work between Engineering, VPD and other agencies to explore a 300 metre area to proactively reduce any ancillary camping, litter, disorder, criminal activity or other impacts to improve integration with adjacent businesses and residents;
 5. Articulate the plan and process to adjacent businesses and residents, and develop a feedback mechanism and good neighbor agreement;

Further that, in reporting back to Council regarding the aforementioned options, the staff report include possibilities of provincial and federal funding available to cover capital infrastructure investments and operating costs.

- B. City of Vancouver staff work with other partner agencies and the people who need housing to outline supportive services for each option including overdose prevention, safe spaces for women, harm reduction supports for drug users, housing and health referral, access to water and sanitation, security of person and property, adequate and frequent garbage removal, trauma-informed services, options for low barrier and sober living, access to safer supply, other health services such as COVID-19 testing facilities, as well as culturally-appropriate services with emphasis on Indigenous traditions of healing and wellness, with the intent of ensuring that options are available that make people with various gifts and needs feel welcome and safe.
- C. Once approved by council, City staff work with BC Housing and other government and non-profit agencies to invite unsheltered residents to move into housing units or other available options, then to more permanent housing, as it becomes available.
- D. City staff consult meaningfully with unsheltered people re: what they would find most suitable, and work to offer choices to unsheltered people that best meet their circumstances, choices of different kinds of accommodation with different management styles, including indigenous led with peers involved.
- E. Staff also work with BC Housing and other government departments and agencies to secure long-term housing options for unsheltered residents, including and purchasing and refurbishing single-room occupancy residences or other available housing stock.
- F. Staff work to expedite the necessary planning approval of the 450 modular housing units recently and jointly announced with the Province.
- G. Staff work with the Province to expedite the newly announced navigation centre.
- H. On behalf of Council, the Mayor request federal and provincial funding to cover all associated costs for implementation of any or all of the options City Council approves.
- I. THAT the Mayor write to the Federal Government, Prime Minister and appropriate Ministers affirming Vancouver City Council's support for the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) urgent call to pursue a federal initiative and partnership to rapidly repurpose on-sale private buildings as permanent, non-profit housing for vulnerable Canadians, by helping non-profit community housing providers rapidly acquire, renovate and retrofit two kinds of buildings (buildings to convert to deeply affordable and supportive housing and existing moderate-rent residential buildings) to create additional permanent supportive housing to replace costly temporary shelters.
- J. THAT Council direct staff to explore and report back with recommendations for actions the City of Vancouver may consider leading or participating in, to support regional solutions to provide relief, shelter and support for people experiencing homelessness;

FURTHER THAT Council request the Mayor engage with the Metro Vancouver Mayors' Committee, on a developing regional strategy to address homelessness in the Metro Vancouver region.

APPENDIX B:

The Homelessness Services Outreach Team has carried out a number of street based surveys with people sleeping outside. Recent previous surveys in 2019 and 2017 asked questions regarding homeless shelter usage and needs, as well as housing aspirations.

The survey was conducted again between September 22 and 25, 2020 with people who were sleeping outside. 83 unique individuals were surveyed about their housing history, shelter usage, potential appeal of a managed encampment service and considerations regarding support services needed.⁵⁴

Interviews were conducted both early in the morning, between 6 and 8AM, as well as later in the evening between 9 and 11PM. Interviewers looked for people in the places where they were sleeping, and conducted interviews on site. Interviews were recorded by outreach staff on an online form and submitted to a general database.

People were asked for their name and most chose to provide first and last name. Duplicate interviews were recognised through common names, and verified through the details of the interview. Participants were offered a prepaid coffee card for their time.

Percentages given can add up to more than 100% due to rounding

Geography and Demographics

- A total of 83 surveys were conducted:
 - 16 in the West End
 - 12 in Strathcona Park
 - 17 along Granville St (and adjacent parks and alleys)
 - 38 in the DTES
- Gender:
 - Female 22 (27%)
 - Male 58 (70%)
 - Other gender Identity 3 (4%)
- Age
 - The youngest person surveyed was 19, and the oldest was 70 years old.
 - The median (middle) age of all survey participants was 40.
 - For Females 33
 - For Males 41.5
 - The mean (average) age of all survey participants was 39.9
 - For Females 36.8
 - For Males 41.6
- Indigenous Identity
 - 27 (33%) identified as Aboriginal
 - 53 (64%) did not identify with any racial or cultural group
 - 3 People identified as identifying with a racial or cultural group. (Korean, Spanish, Moroccan)

⁵⁴ A key difference with this survey compared to previous surveys is the time of year it was conducted. Previous surveys were done during the winter months when less people are typically sleeping outside. During the week of this survey, there were shelter beds available at all times. Albeit, weather conditions were terrible with an Environment Canada extreme rainfall warning in effect for the entire period staff were conducting interviews with people outside.

Health

- 23 (28%) People reported no mental health or physical issues
- 11 (13%) People reported solely physical health issues
- 23 (28%) People reported solely mental health concerns
- 26 (31%) People reported both physical and mental health concerns
- 39 of the 60 people (65%) who report the above concerns also report not being connected to primary care or mental health service connection.
- 53 of the entire group of 83 people (64%) surveyed reported no supports in either health or mental health services.

Homelessness

- The majority of people (54 or 65%) reported being homeless for “years”
- A further 26 people or 31% reported being homeless for “months”
- The remaining 3 people related that they had been homeless for “days” or “weeks”

Housing History

- People were asked where their last housing (rent paid) was by community:
 - 48 Vancouver (58%)
 - 19 Lower Mainland (23%)
 - 10 From elsewhere in BC (12%)
 - 6 From outside BC (7%)

Shelter Usage

In this survey, responses regarding shelter services were consistent with previous surveys. Shelter usage patterns were similar, as were reasons given for not accessing shelter and choosing to sleep outside. The reason given most often for not accessing shelter has always been related to the chaotic environment and safety concerns people feel are prevalent in homeless shelters. People voiced other concerns around the opening times, line-ups, high barrier entry requirements, as well as couples policies preventing them from accessing shelter beds.

- 22 (27%) of the 83 people “often” utilized shelter services.
- 13 (59%) of the 22 females surveyed “often” use shelter services
- 9 (16%) of the 58 males surveyed “often” use shelter services

Managed Encampments

A consistent message was given by respondents regarding encampments, and potential managed encampments. 75% of all people (62 of 83) surveyed had concerns regarding personal safety and security when considering a managed encampment. This includes both people unwilling to use this service, as well as those who were willing to consider it.

- 14 (17%) people of the 83 surveyed had previously stayed at Strathcona Park, but had left because of safety, theft or behaviour issues, most often described as chaos.
- 37 (46%) people said they would not stay in a managed encampment under any circumstance. Overwhelmingly, the reason given was the chaotic environment they felt was inherent with this environment.
- 46 (55%) people of the 83 surveyed would consider staying in a managed encampment. Of those who would consider staying in a managed encampment:
 - 25 (54%) cited personal safety as their concern
 - 22 (48%) felt there should be a “check-in” procedures

- 18 (39%) would stay only with some circumstances being met (security, food, and showers were mentioned most often). Other supports less frequently mentioned included harm reduction supports, outreach supports to end homeless, electricity, storage, and garbage pick-up.
- 6 (13%) felt that an encampment should not have a “check-in” procedure
- 15 of the 22 females surveyed would stay in a managed encampment, although every female respondent mentioned security as the deciding factor in their consideration of this service.
- Of the 8 females respondents who would not stay in a managed encampment, safety, security and the chaotic environment of previous encampments was identified as reasons why they would not consider this option.

Encampment Services Requested

54 respondents noted services they would like to see in a managed encampment: (people could select more than one response)

- Intake Procedures - 41
- Rules (violence, behaviour, noise, cleanliness) – 40
- Security – 33
- Showers – 30
- Food – 27
- Harm Reduction Services – 11
- Community aspects - 8
- Housing Navigation – 6
- Electricity – 2
- Water - 2