



City of Powell River

Committee of the Whole Meeting

Tuesday, June 30, 2026 (2:00 PM)

Council Chambers, City Hall

Agenda

This meeting can be viewed through the live webcast at
<https://powellriver.ca/PAGES/WEBCASTS>

or viewed afterward by watching the recorded meeting video available at
<https://powellriver.civicweb.net/Portal/MeetingTypeList.aspx>

Members of the public can call in during:

- 1. Public Input Period to *make a comment* regarding an item listed under Legislative Matters, Committee Recommendations, or New Business;**
- 2. Public Clarification period to *ask a question* related to an agenda item.**

There is a delay between the live meeting and the webcast so if you are calling in, please turn off the sound on your device to avoid any feedback noise.

Written comments or questions regarding an agenda item received via info@powellriver.ca no later than 1:00 pm on the day of a meeting may be read out during Public Input Period or Public Clarification Period. Emails may be subject to quarantine by the City's cybersecurity filters.

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1. Call to Order

2. Adoption of Agenda

2.1 Adoption of Agenda

Recommendation:

THAT the agenda for the June 30, 2026 Committee of the Whole meeting be adopted.

3. Motion to Close the Meeting to the Public

Recommendation:

THAT Committee move into a closed meeting to discuss matters covered by the *Community Charter* under Section 90(1):

(a) personal information about an identifiable individual who holds or is being considered for a position as an officer, employee or agent of the municipality or another position appointed by the municipality; and

(i) the receipt of advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose.

4. Reconvene (3:30 PM)

5. Territorial Acknowledgement

6. Public Input Period

Subject to the rules of conduct set out in section 11 of the Council Procedure Bylaw, up to three members of the public have an opportunity to provide comment for a maximum of two minutes on items listed under:

- Legislative Matters
- Committee Recommendations
- New Business

Questions may not be asked about a public hearing where the bylaw has not yet been adopted, defeated or abandoned, nor on any of the other matters listed in section 19(8) of the Council Procedure Bylaw.

Call: 1-833-782-7295

Meeting ID: 921 100 262#

Please ensure any written comments are received by the Corporate Officer no later than 1 pm on the day of the meeting.

7. General Matters

- 7.1 Delegation: Bert Finnamore, qathet Museum & Archives Society regarding Update from Museum Development Committee**

8. Consent Agenda

Council may vote on and adopt in one motion all recommendations appearing in the Consent Agenda. A member may request that an item be removed from the consent agenda to be considered separately for any reason and without debate.

Recommendation:

THAT the June 30, 2026 Consent Agenda be adopted.

- 8.1 Adoption of the Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting held June 16, 2026** 5 - 8

THAT the minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held June 16, 2026 be adopted.

9. Items Removed from Consent Agenda

10. Legislative Matters

11. Unfinished Business

12. New Business

- 12.1 Homeless Encampments Located on City Property - Policy Direction** 9 - 58

Tabled from Committee of the Whole, June 16, 2026

Motion tabled from Committee of the Whole, June 16, 2026

PURSUANT to the report of the Chief Administrative Officer dated for the Committee of the Whole meeting of June 16, 2026, entitled: "Homeless Encampments Located on City Property – Policy Direction", that the Committee recommend:

THAT Council direct staff to amend The Corporation of the District of Powell River Parks Regulation By-law 845, 1976, as amended by The Corporation of the District of Powell River Parks Regulation By-law No.845, 1976, Amendment Bylaw No. 1866, 1999, (the "Parks Bylaw") to prohibit overnight sheltering in certain parks and public spaces and allow it in others and bring back the bylaw to a future Council meeting for review.

13. Introduction of Late Items

14. Introduction of Notice of Motion

15. Public Clarification

Subject to the rules of conduct set out in section 11 of the Council Procedure Bylaw, members of the public may ask questions to clarify items discussed during the meeting for a maximum of 2 minutes.

Questions may not be asked about a public hearing where the bylaw has not yet been adopted, defeated or abandoned, nor on any of the other matters listed in section 19(8) of the Council Procedure Bylaw.

Call: 1-833-782-7295

Meeting ID: 921 100 262#

Written questions must be received by the Corporate Officer no later than 1 pm on the day of the meeting.

16. Adjournment

City of Powell River

Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting held in the Council Chambers, City Hall on Tuesday, June 16, 2026 at 2:00 PM.

Present:
Councillor G.W.F. Doubt, Chair
Mayor R.J. Woznow
Councillor E.L. Almeida
Councillor C.A. Elliott
Councillor T.E. Isakson
Councillor J.G. Palm
Councillor R.R.D. Southcott

Also Present:
Sundance Topham, Chief Administrative Officer
Peter DeJong, Corporate Officer
Jessica Walls, Deputy Corporate Officer/Recording Secretary
Jason Gow, Director of Planning Services
Jamie Bretzlaff, Director of Parks, Recreation and Culture
Mark Rowlands, Director of Infrastructure Services
Rocky Swanson, Deputy Fire Chief
Lee Dyson, RCMP Detachment Commander
Susan Auchterlonie, Manager of Partnerships and Intergovernmental & Public Relations
Karsten Sian, IT Technician
Members of the Public
Media Representatives

Note: The meeting was live-streamed and members of the public were invited to call in to participate during Public Input Period and Public Clarification.

1. Call to Order

1.1 The Chair called the meeting to order at 3:30 pm.

2. Adoption of Agenda

2.1 Adoption of Agenda

Moved

THAT the agenda for the June 16, 2026 Committee of the Whole meeting be adopted. easy

Carried

3. Motion to Close the Meeting to the Public

3.1 Moved

THAT the Committee move into a closed meeting to discuss matters covered by the *Community Charter* under:

Sections 90(1):

- (a) personal information about an identifiable individual who holds or is being considered for a position as an officer, employee or agent of the municipality or another position appointed by the municipality;
- (c) labour relations or other employee relations;
- (g) litigation or potential litigation affecting the municipality; and
- (i) the receipt of advice that is subject to solicitor-client privilege, including communications necessary for that purpose.

Carried

4. Reconvene (3:30 PM)

The open meeting reconvened at 3:30 pm.

5. Territorial Acknowledgement

5.1 The Chair provided a territorial acknowledgement.

6. Public Input Period

6.1 A member of the public participated in Public Input Period.

7. General Matters

7.1 Delegation: Annie Wise, Executive Director, Sunshine Coast Tourism regarding Annual Update on Activities of Sunshine Coast Tourism

Annie Wise, Executive Director, Sunshine Coast Tourism provided a visual presentation regarding Annual Update on Activities of Sunshine Coast Tourism

8. Consent Agenda

Moved

THAT the June 16, 2026 Consent Agenda be adopted.

8.1 Adoption of the Minutes of the Committee of the Whole Meeting held June 2, 2026

THAT the minutes of the Committee of the Whole meeting held June 2, 2026 be adopted.

Carried

9. Items Removed from Consent Agenda

10. Legislative Matters

11. Unfinished Business

12. New Business

12.1 Homeless Encampments Located on City Property – Policy Direction
Chief Administrative Officer

Mayor Woznow left the meeting at 4:44 pm.

Moved

THAT the Committee postpone any decision regarding policy direction on homeless encampments on City property to the June 30 COTW meeting

Defeated

Opposed: Councillors Almeida, Isakson, Southcott, and Elliott

PURSUANT to the report of the Chief Administrative Officer dated for the Committee of the Whole meeting of June 16, 2026, entitled: “Homeless Encampments Located on City Property – Policy Direction”, that the Committee recommend:

Moved that it be recommended to Council:

THAT Council direct staff to amend “City of Powell River 2026 - 2030 Financial Plan Bylaw 2794, 2026” to include \$30,000 in 2026 for the cleanup of encampments on City land with the funding coming from the Financial Stabilization Reserve Fund;

THAT Council direct staff to include funding in the 2027 budgeting process for FireSmarting high-risk City parks; and

THAT Council direct staff to include funding in the 2027 budgeting process for increased capacity to deal with homelessness and homeless encampments within the City of Powell River, including additional dedicated bylaw enforcement resources, increased dedicated parks resources and funding for encampment cleanup responses.

Carried

Opposed: Councillors Doubt and Palm

Moved that it be recommended to Council:

THAT Council direct staff to amend The Corporation of the District of Powell River Parks Regulation By-law 845, 1976, as amended by The Corporation of the District of Powell River Parks Regulation By-law No.845, 1976, Amendment Bylaw No. 1866, 1999, (the “Parks Bylaw”) to prohibit overnight sheltering in certain parks and public spaces and allow it in others and bring back the bylaw to a future Council meeting for review.

Motion to Table:

Moved

THAT the motion be tabled until the June 30, 2026 Committee of the Whole meeting.

Carried

Opposed: Councillor Isakson

12.2 Water Supply & Restrictions - Councillor Southcott

The Director of Infrastructure Services reported on the status of Powell River's water supply and the rationale for stage 2 water restrictions.

13. Introduction of Late Items

14. Introduction of Notice of Motion

15. Public Clarification

15.1 Members of the public sought clarification on item 12.1.

16. Adjournment

16.1 The Chair adjourned the meeting at 5:27 pm.

The next Committee of the Whole meeting will be held on June 30, 2026 at 3:30 pm.

Certified Correct

Presiding Member

Corporate Officer



Request for Decision

Date of Meeting: June 16, 2026 File No.: 0530-02
To: Committee of the Whole
From: Sundance Topham, Chief Administrative Officer
Subject: Homeless Encampments Located on City Property – Policy Direction

Purpose:

The purpose of this report is to receive policy direction from Council as to how to respond to homeless encampments located on City-owned property.

Recommendation:

PURSUANT to the report of the Chief Administrative Officer dated for the Committee of the Whole meeting of June 16, 2026, entitled: “Homeless Encampments Located on City Property – Policy Direction”, that the Committee recommend:

1. THAT Council direct staff to amend The Corporation of the District of Powell River Parks Regulation By-law 845, 1976, as amended by The Corporation of the District of Powell River Parks Regulation By-law No.845, 1976, Amendment Bylaw No. 1866, 1999, (the “Parks Bylaw”) to prohibit overnight sheltering in certain parks and public spaces and allow it in others and bring back the bylaw to a future Council meeting for review.
2. THAT Council direct staff to amend “City of Powell River 2026 - 2030 Financial Plan Bylaw 2794, 2026” to include \$30,000 in 2026 for the cleanup of encampments on City land with the funding coming from the Financial Stabilization Reserve Fund.
3. THAT Council direct staff to include funding in the 2027 budgeting process for FireSmarting high-risk City parks.
4. THAT Council direct staff to include funding in the 2027 budgeting process for increased capacity to deal with homelessness and homeless encampments within the City of Powell River, including additional dedicated bylaw enforcement resources, increased dedicated parks resources and funding for encampment cleanup responses.

Background:

The City of Powell River, like most other municipalities in the province, is affected by homelessness, and has seen an increase in the number of homeless encampments located on municipal property.

With the opening of the new Driftwood Shelter in late April, and the support of the province through the HEART (Homeless Encampment Action Response Team), and the accompanying Encampment Working Group, now is the time to bring an update to Council on homeless encampments located on City property, along with a request for policy direction to mitigate the effects of the encampments.

It is important to be clear that staff are not aware of any municipality in the province that has successfully dealt with solving the issues associated with homelessness and substance abuse, and that we are limited in terms of resources and expertise. Despite this, the City is already being forced to play an enhanced role, and before advancing the City response further, it is important to receive policy direction from Council.

This report is supplemental to a previous update provided to Council at the April 16, 2026 regular Council meeting. Please refer to that report for additional background and details as per the link included below.

[April 16, 2026 Council Meeting](#)

Discussion:

In March of 2025 the 20-bed emergency shelter located in Powell River closed, displacing 20 plus individuals. With no shelter options, individuals began sheltering outdoors in several main areas including Complex Way (pole line side), Barnet area (behind RCMP), trail system between Complex Way and surrounding areas, open qathet Regional District (qRD) lands near 4910 Joyce Avenue, and Willingdon Beach Trail. Smaller encampments have also been constructed in a variety of other locations.

The shelter closure left no additional shelter options and a lengthy prioritization list for the only supportive housing site in community (Blackberry Creek), very few options remained.

It is estimated that there are currently approximately 77 individuals in the community sheltering outdoors in dispersed locations across Powell River, and these individuals are sleeping in tents or unsanctioned structures.

With the opening of the new Driftwood Shelter, there is an opportunity to see up to 40 individuals access the shelter. As can be seen from the number of individuals currently sheltering outdoors, versus capacity at the Driftwood Shelter, not enough spaces currently exist.

On top of the lack of available beds, a number of other considerations are in place regarding the Driftwood Shelter, including:

- Some individuals have expressed that they do not wish to go to shelter. Some of these reasons include pets, limited storage options, couples that wish to remain together.
- There have also been reports of concerns for individual safety. Many choose to set up encampments in remote areas because of a perceived risk for life and personal safety associated with shelters and general congregation.
- With warmer weather, there is expected to be less uptick in shelter usage.

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- The Driftwood shelter is a walk-up, first come, first served shelter.
 - Driftwood shelter intake begins at 4:00pm and closes at midnight, daily.
 - There are no ins and outs at the Driftwood shelter during the evening.
 - Individuals will need to leave the shelter every day between noon and 4 pm. The shelter currently has a tote for clients to leave their belongings (up to 100 litres).

Although mitigation efforts are in play through the partners of the Encampment Working Group, including bringing on additional resources to support relocation efforts, and providing clear communications as to available resources and identifying potential options, the reality is that there will be a number of individuals and encampments located on City property despite the best efforts of the community partners.

Having individuals shelter outdoors on City property brings up a number of issues that have been identified by staff, including:

- Significant costs due to emergency response calls.
- Complaints from public about garbage/waste accumulation.
- Negative interactions with public.
- Environmental concerns, including for fish-bearing streams in proximity.
- Concerns about inappropriate discarding of drug paraphernalia.
- Decreased access to food resources.
- Impact to forested area from tent encampments and accumulation of refuse resulting in rising clean-up costs.
- Life safety/health concerns for encampment residents due to risks inherent to living rough outdoors.
- Increased risk of wildfires that may have a community wide impact.
- Increase in illegal activities associated with encampments.
- Public perception of increased safety risk due to increased and unplanned interactions with encampment residents.
- Escalating public health and community risks (such as fires, used paraphernalia, human bio-waste).
- As highlighted by the BC Conservation Officer, increased risk for wildlife-human encounters due to improper waste-management and food storage at encampments
- Additional risks include ongoing damage to recreational, municipal, residential and commercial infrastructure, environmental and archaeological concerns, and increased operational demands related to vandalism, asset repair, and hazardous material response. These impacts are expected to intensify with the onset of warmer weather.

Although the HEART program has proven to be a positive support, and the Encampment Working Group is a good venue for planning a response to encampments on City owned land, the actual responsibility for ensuring that City land is maintained in a good state and local

bylaws are upheld is the City's. The Encampment Working Group and the Encampment Response Plan outlines supports/resources to help unhoused individuals transition to indoor locations. The Encampment Response Plan does not speak to the landowner's authority to enforce land use.

The City has already had to respond to concerns raised by LIFT in regards to the congregation of people adjacent to the new Driftwood Shelter. As the shelter contractor they are working hard to enforce rules associated with responsible behaviour for the shelter and the Overdose Prevention Site (OPS), but if people choose to ignore their direction and trespass on City land, it is the City and/or the RCMP that ultimately respond to enforce any regulations.

On municipal land the City is responsible for serving notices under the *Trespass Act*, and potentially the *Transportation Act*. The City will coordinate with the Powell River RCMP to enforce the closure of encampments as necessary. Once campers have departed, the City will be responsible for limiting or discouraging the establishment of new encampments at the sites, as well as any cleanup of the sites.

All the City lands where the encampments are or have been located are zoned for park use, whether developed with recreational facilities or in a natural state, and are under the custody, care, management and jurisdiction of the Parks, Recreation and Culture Department. Although the current City of Powell River Parks Bylaw limits the times in which the public can access the parks (between 6:00 am and 11:00 pm unless authorized by the Director through a Park Use Permit), they are woefully out-of-date (main Parks Regulation Bylaw 845 dating to 1976 and amending Parks Bylaw 1866 dating to 1999 – bylaws attached as Appendix A), and need to be amended or replaced.

Amendments to the Parks Bylaw would need to reflect that the legal landscape has changed considerably since the existing bylaw was enacted in the 1970s. Most notably, since 2008 there have been a number of decisions from B.C. courts pertaining to outdoor sheltering in public spaces, starting with *Victoria (City) v. Adams (2008)* and further developed in *Abbotsford vs. Shantz (2015)* and subsequent decisions.

These decisions are rooted in the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, specifically section 7, which states that everyone has the right to life, liberty and security of the person. B.C. courts have determined that, in the absence of sufficient access to indoor overnight shelter space, a municipality cannot prohibit a person from erecting a shelter on public lands to protect themselves from the elements without infringing that person's right to life and security of the person. The practical effect of this is that, in communities where the demand for emergency shelter spaces exceeds the supply of such spaces, an outright ban on overnight sheltering in parks is unconstitutional and unenforceable.

As there have not been adequate shelter facilities since the emergency shelter closed in March 2025, and in acknowledgment of the current state of the law, Bylaw Enforcement Officers have not been enforcing the current blanket prohibition against overnight sheltering in parks. However, the discrepancy between the current bylaw and case law creates confusion and conflict within the community, as residents often reference the existing outdated bylaw prohibition, as well as the visible "no camping" signage within the City's parks.

Instead, in the absence of clear policy direction, staff have taken the position of only moving forward with minimal enforcement activities; more specifically staff have been:

- Responding to fire complaints - There are restrictions on the backyard burning and the Fire Prevention Bylaw prohibits campfires except through special permit from the Fire Chief, and there are requirements that must be met. The fire department has been responding to the fire complaints and dealing with them on a case-by-case basis.
- Intermittent patrols for fire safety issues.
- Responding to medical issues.
- Responding to issues related to the building of large structures.
- Bylaw Enforcement Officers have been undertaking regular patrols for additional structures and discarded paraphernalia.
- Parks and Operations departments have taken a supportive role, wherein bylaw enforcement will receive a complaint, deal with discarded needles and then request clean-up assistance from both Parks and Operations, with these two divisions assisting in the required clean-up.
- Response to calls for service involving homeless encampments by the Powell River RCMP presents an inherent challenge in terms of reliable quantification and reporting. These occurrences are not consistently captured under a single, discrete file classification, and may instead be recorded across a range of occurrence types such as trespass, mischief, public disturbance, or general assistance calls.

In practice, Members respond to a significant volume of calls involving individuals who are currently unhoused, spanning a broad spectrum of circumstances. These include criminal occurrences where individuals may be involved as either victims or offenders, medical or wellbeing checks initiated by the public, and complaints related to unwanted persons or trespassing.

- With regards to safety, staff have been avoiding encampment areas during regular operations for the most part. This leaves additional risks with the lack of regular inspections and reduced understanding of the specific impacts to areas of city parks and civic properties.

Importantly, staff have not been attempting to remove all encampments and unhoused people from municipal property.

With the new Driftwood Shelter now open, and recognizing that policy direction is required from Council before moving forward with any significant changes to existing practice, staff have identified several potential options for Council to consider in relation to homeless encampments on City owned property:

A. Status Quo:

Under this scenario staff continue to respond to fire complaints and larger structures, and do not attempt to remove encampments and unhoused people from municipal property.

B. Enact Changes to the Parks Bylaw to regulate overnight sheltering:

To manage public spaces both effectively and legally, staff looked into what other communities are doing and best practices in regard to regulating overnight sheltering in public places or parks, and identified three main approaches that a municipality can take:

1. Allow overnight sheltering in all parks (with limitations such as specified hours, proximity to park infrastructure, etc.), or
2. Allow overnight sheltering in one specified park or public space (i.e. an encampment site) and prohibit it everywhere else, or
3. Prohibit overnight sheltering in certain parks, and allow it in others (again, with limitations).

C. FireSmart forested areas to improve site lines and discourage camping:

Similar to what has taken place on the qathet Regional District (qRD) owned property adjacent to the Blackberry Creek Supportive Housing location, the City could work to FireSmart forested areas. This option can be included as an addition to the other identified options.

A review of these options is as follows:

Option A: Status Quo

Option A doesn't change the existing process or procedures for dealing with encampments on City property. This is not a preferred approach, as the current situation has brought forth several concerns, as noted earlier in the report. For clarity these are:

- Significant costs due to emergency response calls.
- Additional risks include ongoing damage to recreational and municipal infrastructure, environmental and archaeological concerns, and increased operational demands related to vandalism, asset repair, and hazardous material response. These impacts are expected to intensify with the onset of warmer weather.
- As highlighted by the BC Conservation Officer, increased risk for wildlife-human encounters due to improper waste-management and food storage at encampments
- Significant costs due to emergency response calls.
- Complaints from public about garbage/waste accumulation.
- Negative interactions with public.
- Environmental concerns for fish-bearing streams in proximity.
- Concerns about inappropriate discarding of drug paraphernalia.
- Decreased access to food resources.

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- Impact to forested area from tent encampments and accumulation of refuse resulting in rising clean-up costs.
 - Life safety/health concerns for encampment residents due to risks inherent to living rough outdoors.
 - Increased risk of wildfires that may have a community wide impact.
 - Increase in illegal activities associated with encampments.
 - Public perception of increased safety risk due to increased and unplanned interactions with encampment residents.
 - Escalating public health and community risks (such as fires, used paraphernalia, human bio-waste).
 - Additional risks include ongoing damage to recreational and municipal infrastructure, environmental and archaeological concerns, and increased operational demands related to vandalism, asset repair, and hazardous material response. These impacts are expected to intensify with the onset of warmer weather.

Financial Implications:

The City has not historically tracked the costs of monitoring, responding to and cleaning up homeless encampments. To get a firm handle on the costs involved staff could set up project numbers to track costs and to inform future decision making. The most recent encampment clean up cost approximately \$11,000, which included City staff wages, RCMP, contractor, vehicle, equipment and tipping fees. The response costs vary based on the size and complexity of the encampments.

These efforts have taken City staff away from other important issues; however, the cost of not responding may be greater should a situation occur which impacts the wider community. In addition, by maintaining status quo, there's a risk of encampments occurring in higher risk areas that may drive costs higher. The location and number of encampments impact costs, including risk to nearby infrastructure, which may be damaged, or environmental issues that may require remediation.

Costs associated with the cleanup of existing encampments is not addressed specifically within the City's budget and are currently taken from existing departmental budgets.

Operational Implications:

The operational implications associated with the status quo option include the following:

- Firefighters:

Responses to encampments present significant operational, health, and safety risks to firefighters. Firefighters and other first responders responding to these incidents may be exposed to improperly discarded needles, human waste, biohazardous materials, and unsanitary conditions that increase the risk of injury and disease transmission.

Encampments often contain compressed flammable gas cylinders, propane tanks, fuel containers, and other hazardous materials that can rapidly intensify fire conditions, create explosion hazards, and compromise firefighter safety. Medical responses within encampments can be further complicated by limited access, unstable structures, aggressive

behaviour, illicit drug use, overdose incidents, and exposure to contaminated environments requiring additional scene security and coordination with RCMP and BC Emergency Health Services. These incidents frequently necessitate enhanced scene assessment and increased operational resources to ensure responder and public safety.

2025 Fire department responses to Joyce Avenue encampment, Barnet Street encampment, Harvie Avenue encampment and the supportive housing on Joyce was 94 calls. When you separate out just encampments, the total was 171 responses to encampments in 2025 and 93 encampment related calls in 2026.

- Bylaw Enforcement:

Homelessness-related complaints and encampment enforcement activities continue to increase financial and staffing pressures on municipal bylaw services, with 162 bylaw officer calls related to homelessness, encampments, public disorder, trespassing, and homeless related safety concerns recorded in 2025. These responses require additional Bylaw Officer patrol hours, and increased budgets for specialized training in de-escalation, trauma-informed practices, mental health awareness, and personal protective safety equipment when interacting with individuals experiencing homelessness, which extends beyond the traditional scope of bylaw enforcement duties.

Increased patrols of encampments and public spaces require additional staffing resources, personal protective equipment, communications equipment, and safe work procedures to address exposure risks from discarded needles, human waste, biohazards, campfires, and hazardous materials. Officers may also encounter environments contaminated by illicit substances, including fentanyl and other opioids, creating potential exposure risks through airborne particulates, smoke, or accidental contact, and requiring access to and training in the use of naloxone (Narcan). These evolving responsibilities require ongoing training, enhanced safety protocols, and close coordination with emergency services, health agencies, and social service providers to ensure the safety of officers and the public.

Notably, this significant expansion of operational responsibilities has occurred primarily within the last three years and was not historically considered part of the traditional scope of municipal bylaw enforcement duties.

- Parks, Recreation and Culture:

Parks, Recreation and Culture staff have been historically relied upon for encampment cleanups on City properties. Given increasing demands across all service areas, the capacity for staff to address these in a timely matter, if at all, has diminished.

- RCMP:

Members of the Powell River RCMP have been routinely called upon to provide safety oversight in coordination with partner agencies when addressing homeless encampments. This includes supporting site assessments, the clean-up of abandoned encampments, and the remediation of sites impacted by fire. In these situations, RCMP members play a critical role in ensuring the physical safety and security of bylaw personnel, municipal staff,

contractors, and community partners where there are concerns related to potential threats, conflict, or unpredictable human behaviour. This collaborative approach helps facilitate safe and orderly interventions while mitigating risks to all parties involved.

Accurately isolating and measuring these interactions would require a manual review of individual files, which is both resource-intensive and subject to interpretation. Even with such efforts, consistency and completeness cannot be assured, as the presence of a homeless encampment may not always be clearly documented or may be secondary to the primary occurrence. Accordingly, any statistical representation in this area should be interpreted with caution, as it may not fully capture the scope or frequency of police interactions related to homelessness.

Option B: Amend the existing Parks Bylaw to regulate overnight sheltering

Option B contains three different paths:

1. Allow overnight sheltering in all parks (with limitations such as specified hours, proximity to park infrastructure, etc), or
2. Allow overnight sheltering in one specified park or public space (ie. an encampment site) and prohibit it everywhere else, or
3. Prohibit overnight sheltering in certain parks, and allow it in others (again, with limitations).

Path 1 - Overnight sheltering in all parks (with restrictions)

Allowing overnight sheltering in all parks doesn't solve the issues as identified earlier in the report and is not recommended.

Financial Implications:

Having to respond to various encampment locations within all parks would increase the overall monitoring and response costs, as well as the potential cleanup costs. By limiting overnight camping to specific parks or locations, staff and the City's partners can more easily monitor and respond to situations. To get a firm handle on the costs involved staff could set up project numbers to track costs and to inform future decision making.

The number of encampments, location of each encampment and the level of service Council would like to provide the encampments impacts cost too. If Council would like to provide garbage services, washrooms, maintenance, water, security patrols and additional staffing, this would increase costs further.

Costs associated with the cleanup of existing encampments, or any future cleanup costs for parks where camping is allowed, is not currently contained within the City's budget. Any costs associated with cleanups of existing encampments is currently taken from existing departmental budgets. The City's budget will need to be monitored moving forward, and if changes are made to policies in relation to encampments, amendments may be required.

If this option is chosen it is recommended that additional funds be added to the City of Powell River 2026 - 2030 Financial Plan Bylaw 2794, 2026 to pay for the needed cleanup of existing encampment sites, outside of existing departmental budgets.

Operational Implications:

- Firefighters:

Fire crews would continue to experience operational demands related to homeless encampments located at multiple sites throughout the community. These incidents would require repeated attendance at multiple encampment locations; this does place additional pressure on staffing resources, apparatus availability, and overall emergency response capacity.

- Bylaw Enforcement:

Daily monitoring of multiple homeless encampment locations and responding to ongoing public complaints would require significant bylaw officer time and staffing resources. Officers would be required to conduct regular morning patrols of encampment sites, assess safety concerns, document conditions, engage with occupants, and respond to complaints related to trespassing, fires, debris, noise, and public disorder across several locations throughout the community. These repeated patrol and enforcement activities would create substantial operational demands that reduce officer availability for other core bylaw enforcement duties.

- Parks, Recreation and Culture:

Parks, Recreation and Culture staff anticipate this path would require significant staff increases, requiring small teams of staff to attend multiple parks and locations daily for this purpose alone.

- RCMP:

Allowing encampments within parks or other City-owned properties is anticipated to have an operational impact on RCMP resources. The introduction of time-restricted camping provisions may lead to an increase in calls for service at key transition points, particularly when camping becomes prohibited, as well as when encampments are established prior to permitted times. These periods are likely to generate heightened demand for enforcement and support.

Additionally, during times when bylaw personnel are not available, such calls for service may be directed to the RCMP, adding to existing policing responsibilities. In the context of current service demands, this has the potential to place additional pressure on available resources and may influence overall response capacity. Any resulting delays in response could also influence public perception of the level of service being provided by the Powell River RCMP.

Path 2 - Overnight sheltering in one specified park or public space

Allowing overnight sheltering in a specific park or public space (i.e. one designated encampment site) and prohibiting it everywhere else, contains both positive and negative elements. It would be beneficial as it would limit patrols of other parks and cleanup of material after stays. It provides only one option, and campers learn to take only basics as they are only there for a short period of time.

In terms of negatives associated with this option, the Encampment Working Group notes a strong sentiment of concern for individual safety when encampments are centralized in a common location, and this option could lead to a situation where there is a high chance that the location chosen would become problematic, and concentrating the unhoused population in a specific location would inevitably lead to more issues.

Financial Implications:

By limiting overnight camping to one specific location staff and the City's partners can more easily monitor and respond to situations. To get a firm handle on the costs involved staff could set up project numbers to track costs and to inform future decision making.

The location of the encampment and the level of service Council would like to provide the encampments also impacts cost. If Council would like to provide garbage services, washrooms, maintenance, water, security patrols and additional staffing, this would increase costs further.

As noted earlier, costs associated with the cleanup of existing encampments, or any future cleanup costs for parks where camping is allowed, is not currently contained within the City's budget. Any costs associated with cleanups of existing encampments is currently taken from existing departmental budgets. The City's budget will need to be monitored moving forward, and if changes are made to policies in relation to encampments, amendments may be required.

If this option is chosen it is recommended that additional funds be added to the City of Powell River 2026 - 2030 Financial Plan Bylaw 2794, 2026 to pay for the needed cleanup of existing encampment sites, outside of existing departmental budgets.

Operational Implications:

Although a better option than Path 1, City staff would have a challenge to attend a single, focused encampment site daily, and maintain it to proper safety standards.

- Firefighters:

Fire crews would continue to experience operational demands related to homeless encampments located at multiple sites throughout the community. These incidents would require repeated attendance at multiple encampment locations; this does place additional pressure on staffing resources, apparatus availability, and overall emergency response capacity.

- Bylaw Enforcement:

From a bylaw enforcement perspective having one place (to limit expansion of camps and limit enforcement patrols) that campers can go between 9 pm and 9 am (to ensure camps do not grow and only allows minimal personal items to be left behind) focuses enforcement in the mornings when staff are on duty for moving campers along so our minimally staffed bylaw team are not patrolling multiple sites and chasing campers from one to the other. Times should be changed in any new bylaw amendment.

- Parks, Recreation and Culture:

Parks, Recreation and Culture staff anticipate this path would require less resources than allowing encampments in all parks, or multiple sites; however, resources would still be

required. From an operational perspective, consolidating encampments to a single specific park-site would equate to a more concentrated impact on city parkland. With Path 2, staff anticipate the need for less day-to-day resources but note that the requirement for more focused disposal and remediation efforts on a cyclical basis. While inspections, debris-removal, clean-up, remediation work and general park-site and amenity fixes could potentially be more strategically planned for and allocated for a specific, single encampment location within a chosen park site, staff also note the degree of risk associated with encampment amalgamation; as overcrowding of any property has enhanced potential for significant environmental and/or archaeological risk.

With Path 2, encampment monitoring becomes significantly less detailed, time-consuming, and problematic, but the congregation of multiple encampments presents associated risks that could have exponential associated remediation costs. It should be noted that staff also anticipate additional encampment locations to persist, even if a specific single location is permitted. Associated costs for these continued 'outlier' encampments will still need to be realized.

- RCMP:

From a policing operations perspective, the configuration of permitted encampment locations will also influence response efficiency. Concentrating activity in a single designated area may allow for more streamlined response by requiring attendance at one location; however, it also carries the potential for increased conflict as individuals from different groups interact. Conversely, dispersing encampments across multiple permitted areas may reduce conflicts but will require additional time and resources to attend multiple locations, potentially impacting overall service delivery.

Path 3 - Prohibit overnight sheltering in certain parks and allow it in others (with limitations)

This path provides various options for overnight sheltering, and again, contains both positive and negative elements.

The positive elements include an increased sense of individual safety for the unhoused, as having more than one site can help with overcrowding and conflict.

In terms of negatives, having multiple sites to patrol puts additional stress on already limited municipal resources.

Financial Implications:

Although not as straightforward as having only one location, by limiting overnight camping to a limited number of locations, staff and the City's partners can more easily monitor and respond to situations. To get a firm handle on the costs involved staff could set up project numbers to track costs and to inform future decision making.

The specific locations of the encampments and the level of service Council would like to provide the encampments also impacts cost. If Council would like to provide garbage services, washrooms, maintenance, water, security patrols and additional staffing, this would increase costs further.

As noted earlier, costs associated with the cleanup of existing encampments, or any future cleanup costs for parks where camping is allowed, is not currently contained within the City's budget. Any costs associated with cleanups of existing encampments is currently taken from existing departmental budgets. The City's budget will need to be monitored moving forward, and if changes are made to policies in relation to encampments, amendments may be required.

If this option is chosen it is recommended that additional funds be added to the City of Powell River 2026 - 2030 Financial Plan Bylaw 2794, 2026 to pay for the needed cleanup of existing encampment sites, outside of existing departmental budgets.

Operational Implications:

Although a better option than the status quo, or allowing camping in all City parks, staff would have a challenge to attend multiple encampment sites daily, and maintain them to proper safety standards, within the existing municipal complement and organizational structure.

- Firefighters:

Fire crews would continue to experience operational demands related to homeless encampments located at multiple sites throughout the community. These incidents would require repeated attendance at multiple encampment locations; this does place additional pressure on staffing resources, apparatus availability, and overall emergency response capacity. Multiple sites, from a fire safety perspective, have less of a fire safety risk due to the separation between campers. One large sight creates challenging fire safety risks when a fire happens and is able to spread quickly due to more flammable materials around.

- Bylaw Enforcement:

From a bylaw enforcement perspective, limiting this option to two or three places that campers can go between 9 pm and 9 am would help to limit the number of locations to patrol but may result in people simply shuffling from one permitted location to another. This may still help to provide officers with the opportunity to ensure that no significant structures are developed in any one permitted location, but will also add to the officers' time spent during each day monitoring more than one permitted location. Time may also still be required to monitor unpermitted locations.

- Parks, Recreation and Culture:

Parks, Recreation and Culture staff anticipate this path would require less resources than allowing encampments in all parks; however, resources would still be required. While Path 3 would appear to be an acceptable compromise for day-to-day Parks operations, and any required cyclical disposal/remediation efforts, the day-to-day operational impacts would be directly proportional to the number of allowable sites. It is anticipated that each individual encampment location may take up to three hours of time per day for a team of two parks staff, for a total of six hours of staff time per individual encampment location. This time estimate includes the approximation for time spent accessing individual encampment sites, performing and documenting inspections, any general clean-up required, the necessary transfer of waste and accumulated debris, as well as time spent performing proper disposal. Extra associated time and anticipated resource costs which have not been included in this

time estimate, are the related costs to environmental and archaeological mitigation resulting from individual encampment activities within sensitive parkland locations.

While individual encampment site costs for these purposes and impacts may vary, it is anticipated that the necessary permitting and regulatory approvals, as well as the need for environmental and cultural planning and monitoring for this sort of remediation, could potentially exceed thousands of dollars of additional staff time per instance. It is also anticipated that additional, non-compliant sites will still persist and continue to be created in areas that are not permitted. These ‘outlier’ encampments will still require associated costs and resources to inspect, manage, maintain, remediate, etc.

- RCMP:

From a Policing operations perspective, the configuration of permitted encampment locations will also influence response efficiency. Concentrating activity in a single designated area may allow for more streamlined response by requiring attendance at one location; however, it also carries the potential for increased conflict as individuals from different groups interact. Conversely, dispersing encampments across multiple permitted areas may reduce conflicts but will require additional time and resources to attend multiple locations, potentially impacting overall service delivery.

Option C: FireSmart forested areas to improve site lines and discourage camping

This option should be incorporated into whichever policy direction is provided by Council. An allocation for FireSmarting municipal parks could be included in the 2027 budgeting process, with an opportunity to seek out partnerships and funding to assist.

Broader Efforts and the City’s Role

It needs to be acknowledged that the City is being forced to play an enhanced role, as a landowner, due to issues that are completely outside of our control.

The impacts of inadequate provincial supports with respect to mental health and addiction, poverty reduction and supportive housing are most keenly felt at the local level, and are inevitably being managed by local government. However, it is critical to underscore that municipalities cannot litigate or enforce their way out of homelessness and its impact on communities. While staff are looking for policy direction from Council, we are aware of the advocacy that continues to take place for more fulsome solutions, including ongoing work with BC Housing for long-term supportive housing options, and rezoning of City lands to facilitate below market housing.

Council has also advocated for and initiated numerous homelessness and housing related initiatives during their term, a complete list of these resolutions is attached as Appendix B.

Regional and provincial collaboration is needed for equitable service availability across communities so people may remain in their home communities for support.

All of these initiatives, and more, are intended to form part of a longer-term solution. In the meantime, an updated, constitutionally-compliant bylaw is an essential management tool to

protect the parks system, the public's right to recreate in parks, and the right of unsheltered people to protect themselves from the elements overnight.

Community Concern:

Although highlighted in the report in relation to the existing encampment problem, it needs to be acknowledged that City Council and staff receive communications from individuals and community groups on an ongoing basis in relation to homeless encampments located on City land.

Although there is an understanding that this is not a problem that the City has brought upon itself, there is also an urgent request for the City to do something to try and address the issues.

Issues identified to date by the public include:

- Now that the shelter is open people should not be allowed to have encampments on City land, unless the shelter is fully utilized, and if it is fully utilized, then the encampments should be focused to one specific area, with continual monitoring and enforcement by the City
- Encampments are a hazard to the environment and to public health and safety, putting both the general public and encampment residents themselves in harm's way
- Regulation, monitoring and enforcement are required to address public safety issues
- Danger from fires in forested areas, specifically any fires spreading and destroying City-owned public spaces and/or spreading to nearby neighbourhoods
- Current bylaw is outdated and requires updating to reflect today's modern realities and complexities
- Property damage and theft in surrounding areas

Recommended option:

Each option has its pros and cons, and none solve the root causes of homelessness, but aim to mitigate the impacts of outdoor sheltering in a way that is respectful of all park users, including those sheltering overnight. Staff recommend Option B, Path 3, as it will allow the city to regulate temporary outdoor sheltering in a manner which balances:

- the City's responsibility to provide for stewardship of Parks and Trails, as public assets of the community which provide opportunities for outdoor recreation and enjoyment, and to regulate Parks and Trails in a manner which is consistent with the purposes of these public assets,
- individual rights under the Charter of Rights and Freedoms, including the rights of freedom of assembly, freedom of expression, and security of the person,
- the needs for the unhoused to have a place to shelter with staff's ability to monitor

In consideration of Path 3 and in conjunction with the Encampment Working Group, staff have identified potential criteria for prioritization approach based on:

-
- Public safety risks (fire, encampment paraphernalia)
 - Environmental impact
 - Level of support needs
 - Encampment characteristics (size, structures, generators, etc.)
 - Land use/development priorities/places where young people gather
 - Proximity to existing residential neighbourhoods (i.e. interface zones)

Staff are concerned that none of the options can be adequately addressed without further resources dedicated to the issue. With that in mind, staff are recommending that Council also direct staff to include additional funding in the 2027 budget dedicated to helping address the homeless encampment and homelessness issue.

Because of the significant amount of garbage and the associated environmental impacts of the existing encampments, staff are also recommending that staff allocate specific funds in the City of Powell River 2026 - 2030 Financial Plan Bylaw 2794, 2026 to pay for the required cleanup of these sites.

Staff also recommend that Option C be included, and that a FireSmart program be budgeted for high-risk municipal parks for 2027.

Next Steps:

Should Council choose to direct staff to amend the existing Parks Bylaw one to prohibit overnight sheltering in certain parks, and allow it in others, and bring back the bylaw to a future Council meeting for review, staff will begin the process of revising our Parks Bylaw regulations.

It should be noted that although the focus of this report and the recommendations contained within are on homeless encampments and overnight sheltering in parks and public spaces, the City needs to create a new Parks and Open Spaces Bylaw which includes a number of other significant changes, including language regarding a broad range of parks, trails, and city-owned public space use considerations, including but not limited to: hours of use, commercial use, uses by community groups, animals in parks, vandalism/damage, fires, motorized vehicle use, and other general regulations.

Amendments to the existing Parks Bylaw to focus on overnight sheltering will be the first step, and once staff have had a chance to implement those changes, they will begin work on a new, more comprehensive parks and open spaces bylaw for Council consideration.

In terms of a timeline for implementing any immediate Council direction, should the Committee of the Whole make recommendations to Council, they would go to the July 2, 2026 meeting for approval. Once approved staff would undertake the required work to identify areas for overnight sheltering, and return to Council for consideration of first three readings of the bylaw amendments at the August 18, 2026 Council meeting.

If Council approves amendments to the 2026 financial plan for encampment cleanup costs, staff will begin the work of assessing sites and planning for cleanup.

If Council wishes to accelerate the timeline, a special meeting, or multiple special meetings would need to be scheduled to allow for the passing of the bylaw amendments.

Legislation/Legal

As noted earlier in the report, the legal landscape has changed considerably since the existing bylaw was enacted in the 1970s. B.C. courts have determined that, in the absence of sufficient access to indoor overnight shelter space, a municipality cannot prohibit a person from erecting a shelter on public lands to protect themselves from the elements without infringing that person's constitutional right to life and security of the person in accordance with section 7 of the *Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.

The City's ability to regulate the use of park lands must take this into account, thus requiring amendment of the Parks Bylaw (or creation of a new one). Either way, the City will be relying upon its bylaw(s) and upon the *Trespass Act* to move people from lands where overnight sheltering is prohibited to lands where it's to be permitted. Where prohibited encampments are within municipal highways, the City may also reference the *Transportation Act* and the *Community Charter* to exercise its jurisdiction.

Council Bylaws and Policies

There are no Council bylaws or policies that explicitly deal with homeless encampments on City lands.

Comments from City Departments

Municipal departments were included in the drafting of this report.

Comments from External Agencies and/or the Public

Discussions in relation to this report took place as part of the Encampment Working Group. The qathet Regional District response to the Homeless Encampment Group in relation to their Regional Hospital District Lands is included as Appendix C to this report.

Communications and Engagement

It is anticipated that work to support the implementation of an amended bylaw would be undertaken within existing communications capacity and budget, while the approach to each option would differ as follows:

Option A: Status Quo

Communications would remain status quo, as would responses to public inquiries, and would include regular bylaw-specific awareness campaigns and individual responses to community members.

Option B: An amended Parks Bylaw which includes restrictions to overnight camping

As currently conceived, there would not be a fulsome public engagement process for identifying the potential overnight sheltering locations – this work would be undertaken

by staff – utilizing the criteria as outlined earlier in this report and brought to Council for consideration.

The process of approving the amended bylaw would include an opportunity for public input at Committee and Council meetings. If approved, the amended bylaw would be shared with the community via Council Highlights, as well as using the City’s normal communication channels of the website and social media to raise awareness of the overnight camping restrictions and what the public can expect.

In addition, the amended bylaw would be shared with HEART and Encampment Working Group community partners to assist with their work in relocating individuals in encampments and in relaying information about where to situate, timing and what to expect. Regular bylaw-specific awareness campaigns and individual responses to community members would continue.

Financial Implications:

Financial implications will vary dependent on each option and are included in the analysis provided earlier in the report.

Operational Implications:

Operational implications will vary dependent on each option and are included in the analysis provided earlier in the report.

Strategic Priorities:

Intergovernmental Relations

3. Advocate publicly to the provincial government for supports for mental health, community justice, and emergency response, in order to address the downloading of responsibilities to local government.

Attachments:

1. Appendix A – The Corporation of the District of Powell River Parks Regulation By-law 845, 1976
Appendix A.1 – The Corporation of the District of Powell River Parks Regulation By-law 845, 1976, Amendment Bylaw No. 1866, 1999
2. Appendix B – Council initiatives in respect of homelessness issues from 2023-2026.
3. Appendix C – Operational position of the qathet Regional Hospital District Regarding Encampment Response on Regional Hospital District Lands.

Reviewed by:

- Administrative Services

- Finance Services
- Fire & Emergency Services
- Human Resources
- Infrastructure Services
- Parks, Recreation & Culture
- Partnerships, Intergovernmental & Public Relations
- Planning Services

Respectfully submitted,



Sundance Topham
Chief Administrative Officer

THE CORPORATION OF THE DISTRICT OF POWELL RIVER

BY-LAW NO. 845

A By-law to provide for the use and regulation of Public Parks and Places within The Corporation of the District of Powell River.

The Council of The Corporation of the District of Powell River (hereinafter called "the Municipality") in open meeting assembled, enacts as follows:

1. INTERPRETATION

In this by-law, unless the context otherwise requires, the following expressions shall have the meanings hereinafter assigned to them, that is to say:

- (a) "Public Place" shall mean any public place (other than a park) under the custody, care, management and jurisdiction of the Parks and Recreation Department.
- (b) "Park" shall mean and include any public park, playground, driveway, roadway, path, boulevard, beach and swimming bath under the custody, care, management and jurisdiction of the Parks and Recreation Department.
- (c) The words "Driveway", "Roadway" and "Path" shall mean and include any way or thoroughfare set apart and improved by grading, gravelling or other means for the use of pedestrians or vehicular or animal traffic within Parks or Public Places under the custody, care, management and jurisdiction of the Parks and Recreation Department.
- (d) "Person" shall include any public bodies, bodies corporate, companies and societies.
- (e) "Motor Vehicle" shall mean a vehicle that is designed to be self-propelled.

2. GENERAL PROVISIONS

- (a) The Council hereby appoints the Parks and Recreation Director (hereinafter called "the Director") whose duties, responsibilities and powers shall be assigned to him from time to time by the Council or by any special Committee appointed by, and acting on behalf of the Council, or by the Chief Administrative Officer, in addition to the duties and powers assigned to him under the provisions of this by-law.
- (b) Any person violating any provision of this by-law shall be liable on summary conviction to a fine of not more than five hundred dollars (\$500.00), and a separate offence shall be deemed to be committed on each day during or on which a violation occurs or continues.

AMENDED

By By-Law No. 1866

3. PARK USE PERMITS

- (a) Permission to use a park or any part of a park within the boundaries of the Municipality for other than general public use shall be granted only through the issuance of a park use permit.
- (b) The park use permits shall be in the form as shown on Appendix "A" attached to and forming part of this by-law.
- (c) A park use permit shall be applied for by submitting a statement to the Director, setting forth the purpose for which the permit is requested and the length of time and specific part of any park for which the permit is required. The Director shall have the power to refuse or to grant any park use permit.
- (d) If any person wishes to appeal any decision of the Director regarding the granting or refusal of any park use permit, the appeal shall be made by the deposit of a memorandum in writing with the Director, stating:
 - i) The name or names of the person or persons appealing the decision of the Director, and
 - ii) A statement setting forth the reasons why it is submitted and why the appeal should be allowed.
- (e) The Director on receipt of any notice of appeal as described in 4(d) above shall submit to the Council the original application for the park use permit, the notice of appeal with the park use permit showing certain specific conditions, if any, and a written statement of the Director specifying why the park use permit was refused or why it was granted, containing certain specific conditions.
- (f) The Council may either confirm the decision of the Director with respect to the granting of the park use permit or vary his decision in any way it sees fit, and for the purpose of either varying or confirming his decision as described above, may request the attendance of the Director and the person who is appealing to Council.
- (g) The decision of Council regarding granting of park use permits shall be final and there shall be no appeal from its decision.
- (h) Without restricting the generality of the above provisions regarding the necessity for the obtaining of a park use permit, it shall also be unlawful and an offence against this by-law for any person to:
 - i) Sell or expose for sale or cause to be sold or exposed for sale in any public park or place in the Municipality refreshments, magazines, post cards, photographs, or any other articles or services, except with the written permission of the Municipality.
 - ii) Preach, make an oration, or engage in any manner or kind of political or other demonstration in any public park or place in the Municipality.
 - iii) Hold or attempt to hold any show, concert, exhibition, sports event or other similar activity in any public park or place in the Municipality.

- iv) Light any fire in any public park or place in the Municipality except in such places as are provided by the Municipality for that purpose.
- v) Fire any cannon, gun, rifle, pistol or firearms of any kind or fire or explode any rocket, cracker, Roman candle or other combustible fireworks or explosive material in any public park or place in the Municipality.
- vi) Place or erect any structure, sign, bulletin, board, post, pole or advertising device whatever, or distribute or post, paint or affix any advertisement, bills or other article of an advertising nature in any public park or place unless a park use permit is first obtained and then only in such portions of any such park or place and at such times as may be authorized by the said park use permit.

4. SPECIFIC REGULATIONS

- (a) No person shall climb bark, break, peel, cut, deface, remove, injure, root up or otherwise destroy or damage any tree, shrub, flower, fern, moss, root or grass planted, growing or being in any public park or place in the Municipality, or pluck any flower therein or walk, stand or sit on any border, flower bed, monument, vase, fountain, railing or fence therein, or deface, remove, destroy or injure any gate, fence railing, building, monument, seat, vase, fountain or other property placed or erected therein, and no person shall wilfully, negligently or carelessly suffer or permit any animal belonging to him, or in his custody, possession, or control and lawfully on the street or other public place, to break down, destroy, or injure any tree standing for use or ornament in any such public park or place.
- (b) No person shall carry into, or cause to be placed in any public park or place in the Municipality any dead carcass, dirt, stone, grass cuttings, refuse, or any offensive matter or substance whatever, or commit any nuisance therein.
- (c) No person shall remove any gravel, driftwood, rock, stone, sand, shells or other material, except with the written permission of the Municipality, from any public park or place in the Municipality.
- (d) No person shall wilfully hinder or interrupt, or cause or procure to be hindered or interrupted, the said Municipality or its engineers, surveyors, managers, contractors, servants, agents, workmen or any of them, in the exercise of any of the powers and authorities conferred upon them.
- (e) No person shall wilfully let off or discharge any water so that the same runs waste and useless from or out of any reservoir, pond, lake, fire hydrant, or water main, in any public park or place in the Municipality, and no person shall throw stones or other missiles, or put or deposit any injurious, noxious, or offensive matter in any reservoir, lake, pond, or other receptacles for water in any such public park or place, or upon the ice thereof or commit any nuisance, damage or injury to the works, pipes or water in any public park or place or cause or encourage the same to be done.

- (f) No person shall kill, injure, hurt or otherwise molest or disturb any animal, bird or fish in any public park or place in the Municipality.
- (g) No owner or keeper of any horses, cattle, swine, fowl, dogs or other animals shall suffer the same to go at large, or feed upon any public park or place in the Municipality; horses, cattle, swine, dogs or fowl or other animals found at large therein shall be impounded.
- (h) No person shall use any bath house or dressing room in any public park or place in the Municipality for any purpose other than to change from ordinary apparel to bathing apparel or the reverse.
- (i) No person shall play football, cricket, hockey, baseball, lacrosse, lawn tennis, quoits, bowls, croquet or any other game in any public park or place in the Municipality, except in such portions thereof as may be set apart for that purpose by the Municipality or except when a park use permit has been issued for any such activity.
- (j) It shall be unlawful for any person or persons:
- i) To play ball or any game so as to molest, or interfere with or become a nuisance to the general public on any bathing beach.
 - ii) To use any boat or motor boat in the waters of any such bathing beach among bathers.
 - iii) To interfere with, obstruct, impede, hinder or prevent the performance of the duties of any attendant, lifeguard or other person engaged in superintending, controlling, instructing or overseeing swimming, bathing, or aquatic sports or games at or in any bathing beach under his supervision or control.
 - iv) To enter or utilize any Municipal facility without paying the established fee.
 - v) To operate a motor vehicle in any public park or place.
5. The Director and any other authorized servant or agent of the Municipality shall have power to enforce the maintenance of order in the public parks and other public places of the Municipality, and to remove therefrom any person or persons who may contravene or refuse to comply with any of the regulations or provisions hereinbefore contained.
6. This by-law may be cited as "The Corporation of the District of Powell River Parks Regulation By-law No. 845, 1976."

READ a first time by the Municipal Council this 25th day of May 1976.

READ a second time by the Municipal Council this 25th day of May 1976.

READ a third time by the Municipal Council this 25th day of May 1976.

RECONSIDERED, ADOPTED and FINALLY PASSED by the Municipal Council this 14th day of June 1976.

W.D. Hart
.....
W.D. Hart
Mayor

J. Murray
.....
J. Murray
Municipal Clerk

I hereby certify the above to be a true copy of By-law No. 845 which was passed by the Municipal Council of The Corporation of the District of Powell River the 14th day of June 1976.

J. Murray
.....
Municipal Clerk of the Municipal Council of The Corporation of the District of Powell River.

APPENDIX "A"

THE CORPORATION OF THE DISTRICT OF POWELL RIVER

PARK USE PERMIT

NO. _____

EXPIRES _____ VALID IN _____ PARK

Subject to the terms and conditions contained herein, permission is granted to:

(hereinafter called the "Permittee") of: _____

to use park lands or facilities described as follows: _____

situated in _____ Park, District of Powell River, for the

purpose of _____

commencing _____, 19 ____.

1. The Permittee shall pay to the Municipality, in advance, the permit fee of _____.
2. This permit is subject to the park regulations of the Municipality and to the Sanitation By-law and any amendments thereto and regulations made pursuant to it and is also subject to any other regulations and by-laws which may be in effect within the Municipality.
3. This permit is not transferable.
4. At expiry of this permit, title to all permanent improvements, or construction as installed under permission contained herein, shall revert and remain the property of the Municipality and the Permittee shall not be entitled to any compensation. Any temporary structures must be removed before the expiry date of the permit.
5. This permit is not valid until signed by the Permittee and accompanied by a current official receipt if a fee has been levied.
6. This permit may be cancelled at any time without notice by the Municipality.
7. _____

for The Corporation of the District
of Powell River.

In consideration of the privilege granted herein, I hereby agree to observe and abide by the terms and conditions of this permit.

Dated _____, 19 ____

Permittee

DISTRICT OF POWELL RIVER

Bylaw No. 1866

A bylaw to amend The Corporation of District of Powell River Parks Regulation Bylaw

WHEREAS Section 610 of the *Municipal Act* empowers Council to regulate the use of Public Parks and Places within the District of Powell River.

AND WHEREAS the Council has established a regulation under "The Corporation of District of Powell River Parks Regulation By-law No. 845, 1976",

AND WHEREAS Council wishes to include park opening and closing times under Section 4

THEREFORE the Council of the District of Powell River in open meeting assembled enacts as follows:

TITLE

- 1. This bylaw may be cited as "The Corporation of the District of Powell River Parks Regulation Bylaw No. 845, 1976, Amendment Bylaw No. 1866, 1999".

AMENDMENT

- 2. "The District of Powell River Parks Regulation Bylaw No. 845, 1976" is hereby amended by adding the following to Section 4 SPECIFIC REGULATIONS:


(k) Parks in the boundaries of the Municipality will be open to the public at 6:00 am and will close at 11:00 pm. The Director shall have the power to authorize Park Use Permits for park use before or after the operating hours.

READ A FIRST TIME this 25th day of October, 1999.

READ A SECOND TIME this 25th day of October, 1999.

READ A THIRD TIME this 25th day of October, 1999.

RECONSIDERED AND FINALLY ADOPTED by Municipal Council this 8th day of November, 1999.


A. W. Carlson, Mayor


Isabell Hadford, Municipal Clerk/Personnel Officer

Certified to be a true and correct copy of the "The Corporation of the District of Powell River Parks Regulation Bylaw No. 845, 1976, Amendment Bylaw No. 1866, 1999" as adopted by the Council of the District of Powell River this 8th day of November, 1999.


Isabell Hadford, Municipal Clerk/Personnel Officer

Homelessness/Housing-Related Resolutions 2023-2026

6-4-26

THAT City of Powell River Zoning Bylaw 2100, 2014, Amendment Bylaw 2761 2024, be adopted.

THAT City of Powell River Zoning Bylaw 2100, 2014, Amendment Bylaw 2816, 2026, be adopted.

5-21-26

THAT City of Powell River Zoning Bylaw 2100, 2006, Amendment Bylaw 2816, 2026, be given first, second and third reading

5-7-26

THAT further discussion on a housing authority recommendation be postponed until after a staff report comes to Council regarding the qathet Regional District's non-market housing initiative.

THAT the City invite the mayor of Tofino to present to Council on the approach they took to put in place a housing corporation.

2-5-26

THAT City of Powell River Permanent Closure and Removal of Highway Dedication Bylaw 2760, 2024, be adopted.

12-18-25

THAT Council direct staff to activate city space in partnership with community partners to open a warming centre or extreme weather response shelter and if necessary, that staff amend the license of occupation with the qathet Coalition to End Homelessness for the Duncan street bylaw building.

12-4-25

THAT "City of Powell River Sustainable Official Community Plan Bylaw 2370, 2014, Amendment Bylaw 2783, 2025" be adopted.

4-1-25

THAT staff report back on options for both hot and cold extreme weather response plan for 2025/2026 for unhoused population

3-18-25

Moved and seconded that the committee direct staff to report back to Council on City-owned buildings, bare land or parking lots that may be suitable as an interim measure for emergency sheltering, whether portables or a sanctioned spot for services are provided.

1-23-25

Moved and seconded that Council write a letter to the Minister of Housing and Municipal Affairs to affirm our strong interest in collaborating with the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs and BC Housing in order to increase the number of affordable housing units in our community, including but not limited to housing for seniors, workers, families, and people with disabilities; village models; and second stage transition housing.

THAT Council direct staff to communicate to BC Housing that City of Powell River Council supports locating a temporary shelter and future permanent affordable housing through the provincial Community Housing Fund at 7104 Barnet Street, and

THAT Council direct staff to communicate to BC Housing that they may begin preliminary site investigations to determine whether it is feasible to establish a temporary shelter and future permanent affordable housing at this location.

1-4-25

Moved and seconded that staff report back on options for both hot and cold extreme weather response plan for 2025/2026 for unhoused population

12-19-24

Moved and seconded that the City of Powell River request a copy of the existing contract between BC Housing and LIFT Community Services for the operation of the existing supportive housing unit located at 4910 Joyce Avenue, Powell River; and that BC Housing consider input from the City of Powell River in regard to neighbourhood concerns and expectations prior to issuing a new contract; and that the City of Powell River request BC Housing ensures security, safety, and regular clean-up in the neighbourhood surrounding the supportive housing and shelter buildings; and that a copy of this request be forwarded to the MLA for additional assistance.

12-5-24

Moved and seconded that Council receive City of Powell River 5- and 20-Year Interim Housing Needs Report to comply with the requirements under Bill 44: Housing Statutes (Residential Development) Amendment Act, 2023 and section 790 of the Local Government Act.

10-22-24

Moved and seconded that members of the Committee recommend that Council renew Temporary Use Permit 005 to allow Non-Commercial Short-Term Overnight Accommodation Use at 4746 Joyce Avenue, legally described as Lot 1, Except Part in Plan 12457, of Lot A Block 22 District Lot 5036 Plan 6977, commencing December 15, 2024, and ending March 31, 2025

10-10-24

That staff be directed to issue the letter attached that accepts, in principle, the qathet Regional Hospital District Board's conditional consent as outlined in their August 8, 2024, letter in response to the City's request of the permanent closure and highway dedication removal of the undeveloped portion of Complex Way to permit the development of a second supportive housing facility, and commits the City to the development of a formal agreement that incorporates the conditions of the qathet Regional Hospital District Board's consent following receipt of third reading of "The City of Powell River Permanent Closure & Removal of Highway Dedication Bylaw 2760, 2024", and before Council considers adoption.

7-30-24

Moved and seconded that Council direct staff to publish a Request for Expressions of Interest to select community partner(s) to lead a BC Housing Community Housing Fund application for the 7104 Barnet Street property, with a special interest in Expressions of Interests that include a ground level community amenity that is not housing.

6-20-24

Moved and seconded that Council, with respect to the direction to staff at the June 6 Council meeting regarding Property 24 of the Land Management Strategy (Future Tofino Neighbourhood), direct staff to ensure the servicing modelling study quote be based on medium density, mixed-housing typologies, including neighbourhood commercial development

5-2-24

Moved and seconded that Council direct staff to pursue CMHC Seed Funding for relevant studies needed for the property titled #16 Ewing Place Site in the Land Management Strategy so that the City can move to partner with Foundry or a non-profit housing provider or developer or builder to create a mixed use commercial and residential development to accommodate youth-aged and multi-aged residents.

Moved and seconded that Council direct staff to pursue CMHC Seed Funding for relevant studies needed for the property titled #20 Duncan Street Site in the Land Management Strategy so that the City can move to partner with a non-profit housing provider or developer or builder to create a mixed use commercial or residential development to accommodate low-, or moderate-income households.

2-15-24

Moved and seconded that City of Powell River Housing Agreement Bylaw 2739, 2024 be adopted.

2-1-24

Moved and seconded that Extreme Weather Response Shelter System Resolution be forwarded to the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC) 2024 AGM and Convention for consideration.

Moved and seconded that Housing Authority Feasibility Study Work Resolution be forwarded to the Association of Vancouver Island and Coastal Communities (AVICC) 2024 AGM and Convention for consideration.

11-14-23

Moved and seconded that as per Section 20 of City of Powell River Delegation Bylaw 2367, 2013, Committee of the Whole direct staff to give notice in accordance with Section 494 of the Local Government Act of Council's intention to consider issuance of Temporary Use Permit 011 to allow Non- Commercial Short-Term Overnight Accommodation Use to support the operation of an Emergency Weather Response centre until April 15, 2024, on 4752 Joyce Avenue, legally described as Lot 4 Block 19 District Lot 5036 Plan 13353 with the understanding that prior to approval being granted the applicant will:

- Address all deficiencies related to life safety conditions at 4746 and 4752 Joyce Avenue to the satisfaction of the Fire Chief and Chief Building Official;
- Provide a minimum of daily sunset to sunrise professional security to support the operations of the Emergency Shelter and Emergency Weather Response Centre; and,
- Update the Good Neighbour Agreement for 4746 Joyce Avenue to include 4752 Joyce and provide a copy to the City for review.

10-17-23

Moved and seconded that staff be directed to report back to Council on reconvening the housing round table.

Moved and seconded that staff be directed to report back on the suitable options of City spaces as a warming centre and emergency weather response shelter.

7-13-23

Moved and seconded that the following list of properties, and associated background information included in the July 13 Council agenda, be forwarded to the Minister of Housing as potential municipal land that could be used for housing, in response to the March 24, 2023 letter from the UBCM President:

- Drake Street site made up of 1 parcel;
- Willingdon Avenue site made up of 2 parcels;
- 4720 Ewing Place site made up of 3 parcels;
- 4553 Willingdon Avenue, referred to as Westview Waterfront site, made up of 6 parcels;
- 7104 Barnet Street site made up of 1 parcel;
- 7025 Duncan Street site made up of 1 parcel;
- 7160 Duncan Street, a portion of which may be available to co-locate with the existing public works yard and where the new proposed Firehall may be located; and,
- 5001 Joyce Avenue, a portion of which may be available to co-locate with the existing Recreation Complex.

(minister never followed through with action on community recommendations)

7-11-23

Moved and seconded that staff be directed to complete a Housing Accelerator Fund application.
(unsuccessful)

5-30-23

THAT Mayor Woznow work with staff to prepare a draft UBCM resolution and background information for Council consideration regarding Changes to BC Housing's Delivery, Operations and Management of Supportive Housing.

2-28-23

Moved and seconded that staff be directed to continue discussions with Lift Community Services of qathet Society and the Westview Ratepayers Society, and report back with defined roles, contributions and expectations of each organization, with the objective of providing effective public engagement with the residents of the City of Powell River on the issues of homelessness and harm reduction in the Westview area.

1-17-23

Moved and seconded that the Mayor write a letter of support for a BC Housing Grant Funding request to temporarily extend shelter hours of operation.



May 5, 2026

Subject: Operational position of the qathet Regional Hospital District Regarding Encampment Response on Regional Hospital District Lands

Dear colleagues:

The qathet Regional Hospital District (qRHD) appreciates the continued coordination among the Province of British Columbia, BC Housing, Vancouver Coastal Health, service delivery partners, and local governments in addressing homelessness and unsheltered encampments within the Powell River area.

The purpose of this letter is to clarify the qRHD's operational role going forward, particularly as it relates to encampment response on qRHD-owned lands, and to ensure aligned expectations among all partners.

The qRHD has already demonstrated its readiness and capacity to collaborate meaningfully with the Province and BC Housing. Notably, the qRHD entered into a land-lease arrangement that enabled the Province and BC Housing to develop and operate Blackberry Creek, a rapid-response to homelessness modular supportive housing site referenced within the Powell River Encampment Response Plan.

Through this action, the qRHD:

- Enabled provincially funded and operated supportive housing;
- Supported timely implementation of an indoor housing pathway;
- Collaborated constructively without assuming service delivery responsibilities.

We believe this contribution satisfies and exceeds the readiness criteria outlined under the HEART & HEARTH framework and reflects our commitment to good-faith partnership.

Having fulfilled this enabling role, the qRHD is now appropriately positioned to adopt a maintenance and containment posture, rather than an expanded operational role.

Accordingly, the qRHD's ongoing involvement is limited to:

- Landowner stewardship and asset management;
- Administration of existing agreements, including the Blackberry Creek land lease;
- Protection of public assets, safety, environmental integrity, and access to hospital-adjacent lands.



The qRHD's legislative mandate is limited to financing or granting aid for establishing, acquiring, constructing, reconstructing, enlarging, operating and maintaining hospitals and hospital facilities. It does not provide, manage, or operate homelessness services, shelters, outreach programs, or health and social supports. These functions remain within provincial jurisdiction and under the authority of the Ministry of Housing, BC Housing, and funded service providers.

The qathet Regional District (qRD), as a regional district form of local government, has very prescriptive legislation in terms of service delivery. The qRD is legislated to account for separate, discrete budgets for different regional services. Because the budgets are discrete, revenues and costs specific to one service cannot be arbitrarily shifted to or spread among other services. Participants in one service are not expected to subsidize, and are not permitted to be subsidized by, participants of other services. As a matter of fact, the qRD's Social Planning Service is going through a formal, Minister approved, statutory service review and its activity has been suspended.

Where encampments arise on qRHD-owned lands, including lands located within the City of Powell River:

1. Provincial Leadership Required

Any response must be Province-led, utilizing HEART outreach and HEARTH or other provincially funded housing pathways. Encampments cannot and will not be resolved through enforcement-only approaches or by default local government assumption.

2. Clear Landowner Authority

As landowner, the qRHD retains authority over its lands. Any action impacting qRHD property requires explicit authorization, written agreement, or lawful direction consistent with existing land-use and trespass legislation.

3. Defined Role of Enforcement

Where necessary and lawful, the RCMP will be engaged to preserve the peace and execute landowner decisions for encampment removal processes.

4. No Implied Expansion of Responsibility

Prior collaboration, including Blackberry Creek, must not be construed as implied consent for expanded responsibility, site proliferation, or ongoing operational management by the qRHD.

Internally, the qRHD manages these matters through a single point of authority focused on land and agreement administration only. This ensures clarity, consistency with Board policy, and avoidance of mandate creep.



Externally, we expect:

- BC Housing and the Province to maintain operational leadership;
- Clear accountability for outreach, sheltering, health supports, and aftercare;
- Defined communication protocols where qRHD lands are implicated;
- No assumption of qRHD participation beyond agreed landowner and risk-management roles.

The qRHD remains committed to respectful collaboration grounded in clarity of roles and responsibilities. We view the existing supportive housing footprint at Blackberry Creek as evidence that provincial systems are in place and must now be fully relied upon to address unsheltered encampments, including where impacts occur on qRHD lands.

We welcome continued dialogue to ensure responses are coordinated, lawful, and aligned with jurisdictional responsibilities, while maintaining the safety and integrity of public assets for the benefit of the broader community.

Please consider this letter as a statement of the qRHD's position for operational purposes.

Sincerely,

Al Radke, BSBA, CLGM
Chief Administrative Officer



August 14, 2024

Honourable Minister Ravi Kahlon
Minister of Housing
Room 248 Parliament Buildings
Victoria, BC V8V 1X4

Sent Via Email: HOUS.minister@gov.bc.ca

REQUEST TO RESCIND BILL 45

On behalf of the qathet Regional District Board of Directors, I am writing to you to express our thanks to the Ministry for their decision to not bring the proposed Bill 45 amendments to the *Community Charter* and *Vancouver Charter* in to force at this time. We are further requesting that these amendments be rescinded entirely to ensure that the Province develop sound, long-term policies related to housing and sheltering reforms, with a more balanced approach. This new approach must include greater input from those being impacted by these changes, namely local governments, Indigenous partners and First Nations, Local Governments, community organizations, National and Provincial advocacy groups, law enforcement, and communities.

In November, of 2023, the qathet Regional District expressed concern regarding the Province’s unilateral decision to fast-track the adoption of Bills 44, 45, 46, and 47, and our disappointment regarding the Province’s decision to limit opportunities for civic engagement on these drastic reforms. At that time, our Board requested the immediate withdrawal of Bills 44, 45, 46 and 47 and advocated for the Province to consider the impacts to local communities in relation to density, costs, and local law enforcement and mental health resources. These bills posed a considerable public safety risk and unfairly download responsibility of this public health crisis to local governments, and local taxpayers.

We appreciate the Province’s recognition that Bill 45 fails to consider the impacts on quality of life nor on the long-term impacts on Indigenous partners and First Nations, Local Governments, community organizations, National and Provincial advocacy groups, law enforcement, and communities. We also are grateful to the Ministry for recognizing the burden placed on local governments given that the amendments did not provide enough clarity for a common understanding of “reasonably available alternative shelter”, and the did not adequately determine contexts of the amendment, for the purposes of situational application.

We understand these issues are complex, and have been steadily getting worse over the years. That said, providing shelter for homeless, as well as addressing substance use and mental health concerns of these individuals remains the responsibility of the Province, not local governments. We understand however, that we need to work together to tackle these issues and agree that before enacting such legislation to curtail enforcement of injunctions related to sheltering, the Province must be responsible for ensuring adequate sheltering options are available for those who need it. If the intention, however, is to download responsibility to local government to deal with these social issues, then substantial and ongoing provincial and



federal funding must follow to allow us to address it. We are already constrained with limited revenue streams now to do what we already do. We also must have assurance that such reforms will not entice mass emigration from other provincial jurisdictions to take up residence in our province due to local government's inability to keep encampments from being dismantled, further impacting local taxpayers and increasing the burden on local government staff and law enforcement.

Local governments are a direct link to the communities and people we serve. We have an in-depth understanding of the unique needs of our residents and our environments. Without including the local context, the Province has not adequately evaluated the consequences of enacting such overarching laws which will fail to address these major issues with the delicacy, cooperation, and intergovernmental partnerships they so desperately need. With regard to mental health and homelessness, the multifaceted nature of this problem requires all local governments and partners in British Columbia be offered opportunity to work together with the Province to address these issues together, rather than be strong-armed into emergent and reactive policies that fail to grasp the local situation on the ground. Passing legislation without sufficient input ensures that legislation remains inapplicable, rigid and out-of-touch.

We are adamantly opposed to Bill 45, and strongly request that this bill be rescinded. We further request that the Province come back to the drawing board and work with those directly impacted in a collaborative and empowering fashion. We believe that it is the duty of the Province to perform engagement in the spirit of good governance and transparency, and present a fulsome strategy that includes multiple perspectives from across our diverse province in relation to these issues. In relation to First Nation relations, the Province also has a duty to consult.

Sincerely,

Clay Brander
Chair

Cc. Nicholas Simons, MLA Powell River-Sunshine Coast, nicholas.simons.MLA@leg.bc.ca

Trish Mandewo, UBCM President, tmandewo@coquitlam.ca, ubcm@ubcm.ca



Province steps back from enacting shelter criteria legislation

Publishing Date: July 15, 2024

The Province of B.C. has **decided** that it will not bring into force legislation presently to establish shelter criteria when local governments seek injunctions for decampment.

Bill 45, which received Royal Assent last fall, amended the Community Charter and Vancouver Charter to require local governments who seek injunctions for removing encampments to ensure there is reasonably available shelter to a certain standard.

UBCM **opposed** the legislation on the grounds that the province is not providing adequate shelter space to the quality established by the legislation in B.C. communities. As a result, if enacted, the legislation would make it highly unlikely that a court would grant local governments an injunction for decampment. The likely result of the legislation would be an increasing number of encampments in B.C.'s communities.

“The decision to not bring these changes into force at this time is the right call,” said Councillor Trish Mandewo, president of the Union of B.C. Municipalities. “Communities across B.C. lack sufficient provincial shelter space, which is why we are seeing so many encampments being established. This decision will allow local governments to continue to seek court injunctions for decampment when necessary. That’s an important tool

while we await additional provincial investment to expand local shelter spaces available for unhoused residents.”

The Province to delayed enactment of the legislation last fall to allow time for the Ministry of Housing to consult with UBCM and others. Following that consultation, the Ministry of Housing conveyed in a letter to UBCM and others that it will not be bringing the legislation into force at the present time.

The Community Charter and Vancouver Charter allow municipalities to apply for a court injunction to enforce their bylaws when necessary, including in cases where sheltering takes the form of a continuing encampment.

The Province did not indicate whether it would revisit bringing the legislation into force at a later date. UBCM continues to call on the Province to invest in shelter spaces, supportive housing and complex care facilities, affordable housing, and outreach services to help address homelessness throughout BC.

Tags

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> [Province steps back from enacting shelter criteria legislation](#)



July 10, 2024

Ref: 68477

Dear Local Government Partner,

I am writing today to provide an update on the decision regarding amendments to the *Community Charter* and the *Vancouver Charter* introduced in the *Miscellaneous Statutes Amendments Act* (Bill 45). I also want to express my thanks for providing input and feedback on Bill 45 and Provincial policy regarding homelessness and encampments.

In November 2023, the Attorney General in partnership with the Ministry of Housing (HOUS) introduced amendments to the *Community Charter* and the *Vancouver Charter* in Bill 45. The amendments provide a description of “reasonably available alternative shelter,” in the context of court actions related to encampments, as:

- a place where people may stay overnight,
- have nearby access to washroom and shower,
- are offered a meal, nearby, each day,
- and are in a staffed place.

The purpose of the legislation was to establish criteria so that when local governments go to the courts to remove people from encampments, actions and considerations regarding shelter are informed by a common understanding of what meets a person’s basic needs.

In Fall 2024, the Province heard concerns from Indigenous partners and First Nations, Local Governments, advocacy groups, and other partners regarding the potential impacts of the shelter amendments. In recognition of these concerns, the amendments were not put into force while HOUS engaged in further consultation.

Throughout Winter 2023 and Spring 2024, we engaged with partners to better understand issues and concerns. Feedback was gathered from Indigenous partners and First Nations, Local Governments, community organizations, National and Provincial advocacy groups, law enforcement, and communities. We learned that the amendments did not provide enough clarity for a common understanding of “reasonably available alternative shelter” and the contexts under which the description should or could apply. Partners also shared appreciation for the Province’s efforts to help respond to and prevent encampments through policy, programs, and support for people and communities.

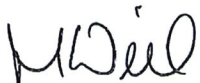
As such, and after careful consideration of the feedback received, **I am writing to inform you that Bill 45 amendments to the *Community Charter* and *Vancouver Charter* will not be brought into force at this time.**

We know that responding to encampments remains a pressing issue; during our engagements we heard clearly from partners that the Province must continue to work urgently and in collaboration to support people sheltering in encampments through access to resources, shelter and housing services, as well as to support partners managing and responding to encampments. We will continue to focus on ending the cycle of homelessness by providing pathways to homes for people, support for people sheltering outdoors, and support for communities through provision of a spectrum of resources, shelter, programs, and housing. These actions will continue to be guided by Belonging in BC (BiBC): plan to prevent and reduce homelessness (<https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/BelongingStrategy.pdf>) and Homes for People: Action Plan (<https://news.gov.bc.ca/files/Homes For People.pdf>).

In addition, the Province is developing a Provincial Encampment Response Resource in collaboration with BC Housing, First Nations, Indigenous and community organizations, Local Governments, and people with lived experience. This resource will provide an overview of provincial policy, wise practices and resources for communities responding to encampments, with a focus on coordination, partnership, and ensuring people-centered, culturally safe responses. This resource will be finalized and available publicly in Summer 2024.

Thank you for taking the time to share your perspectives on this initiative. I appreciate the opportunity to work in partnership to support people sheltering in encampments so everyone has a place to call home.

Yours truly,



Meghan Will
Assistant Deputy Minister
Homelessness, Partnerships & Housing Supports Division

CONFIDENTIAL

Heart and Hearth:

Information for Local Government Partnerships

Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs
and BC Housing



We acknowledge with respect and gratitude this resource was produced on the territories of the Lək̓ʷəŋən peoples, the Songhees and Esquimalt (Xwsepsum) Nations, and WSÁNEĆ Nations

Introduction to HEART & HEARTH

As part of the Belonging in BC Homelessness Plan, the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs (the Ministry) is committed to supporting communities in addressing homelessness with compassion, coordination, and care. To strengthen local responses and improve outcomes for people sheltering outdoors—especially in encampments—the Province has launched two key initiatives: the Homeless Encampment Action Response Teams (HEART) and the Homeless Encampment Action Response Temporary Housing (HEARTH) programs.

HEART and HEARTH are multi-agency efforts that provide timely, person-centered support to individuals in encampments, while fostering collaboration across sectors to ensure safe, stable, and dignified temporary housing initiatives. These programs seek to address community concerns and prevent future encampments.

Funded through Budget 2023, the Province has committed \$228 million in operating and \$44 million in capital funding over three years to support this work. Expanded through Budget 2025 with an additional \$90 million, the program is supported by the Cooperation and Responsible Government Accord (CARGA) between the BC Green Party Caucus and the BC New Democrat Caucus.

This guide offers practical information and tools to help local governments participate in and benefit from HEART and HEARTH. Together, we can build stronger, more inclusive communities where everyone has a place to call home.

What is Homeless Encampment Action Response Team (HEART)?

HEART is a regionally based, multi-agency outreach model coordinated by BC Housing to support municipalities in addressing homelessness with compassion, coordination, and care. BC Housing works with local partners to develop membership and provide funding for HEART positions. HEART brings together municipal staff, Indigenous and non-profit service providers, healthcare professionals, and First Nations partners to respond to encampments and support people living outdoors.

HEART teams work on the ground to:

**Develop and implement
encampment resolution
strategies**

**Identify and analyze system
gaps**

**Share real-time information
about local homelessness**

**Address mental, physical,
cultural, and social support
needs**

HEART builds on existing local efforts—it doesn't replace them. The goal is to prevent homelessness, improve service access, and create lasting solutions for individuals and communities. It adds coordination and capacity to help make homelessness rare, brief, and one-time.

What is Homeless Encampment Action Response Temporary Housing (HEARTH)?

HEARTH works alongside the HEART teams to ensure that people experiencing homelessness are met with real pathways to housing. HEARTH provides a temporary housing option for people in encampments or shelter. It helps individuals move indoors quickly and access the supports they need to transition into longer-term housing.

The program is designed to:

Reduce harm and improve safety for people sheltering outdoors

Respond rapidly to encampments with housing and supports

Support transitions into permanent housing where possible

Coordinate services across local, Indigenous, and provincial partners

To learn more, visit: bchousing.org/housing-assistance/homelessness-services/HEART-HEARTH

Our Shared Commitment

Encampment responses work best when they are coordinated, compassionate, and community informed. HEART and HEARTH are built on the understanding that no single organization or level of government can address homelessness alone. Success depends on strong, respectful collaboration with all levels on governments, Indigenous and community partners.

By working together, we can support people to move safely indoors, access the services they need, and prevent future encampments—while also addressing local concerns and improving community wellbeing.

The following principles guide how HEART and HEARTH are delivered across the province. They reflect our collective values and responsibilities in supporting people experiencing homelessness.

Principles

Center People and Culture	Prioritize human dignity through person-centered approaches, Indigenous-led ceremony, and culturally informed supports.
Minimize Harm and Disruption	Support long-term wellbeing through coordinated indoor housing solutions and integrated health services.
Promote Health and Housing Stability	Ensure transitions are safe, trauma-informed, and as seamless as possible for individuals and communities.
Foster Trusted and Accountable Partnerships	Build strong, transparent relationships grounded in trust, shared responsibility, and mutual respect.
Collaborate for Impact	Engage in inclusive, cross-sector planning and service delivery to meet diverse community needs effectively.
Support Those Who Support Others	Uphold the mental, emotional, and cultural wellbeing of staff and partners delivering this work.

Priority Communities:

The Ministry's priority community selection is based on a variety of factors, including the existence of a complex encampment or encampment areas; the number of people sheltering outdoors; current and historical struggles in the community with large or complex encampments; an overrepresentation of distinct groups of people needing specialized services and supports, including Indigenous peoples; community interest; and the readiness of the local government to implement programs and services.

Local Government Readiness

Readiness refers to a municipality's ability to actively participate in and support a coordinated encampment response through HEART and HEARTH. This includes having the structures, relationships, and processes in place to respond quickly, safely, and collaboratively when encampments arise.

A municipality is considered ready when it can:

- Identify an approved site for a HEARTH location.
- Coordinate locally with BC Housing, Indigenous jurisdictions and partners, health authorities, and non-profits through established collaboration tables.
- Engage in joint planning for outreach, housing transitions, and service delivery.
- Support communication with the public and stakeholders, aligned with provincial messaging.
- Participate in data sharing and assessment, including contributing to coordinated access systems and identifying priority populations.
- Identify and prioritize vulnerable groups, including Indigenous peoples, women, seniors, and people with complex health or substance use needs.

Readiness is not about having all the answers—it's about being prepared to collaborate, adapt, and act quickly to support people sheltering outdoors with dignity and care.

What You Can Expect from the Province

The Ministry and BC Housing are leading a coordinated provincial approach to encampment response and temporary housing. Through HEART and HEARTH, they provide the structure, resources, and guidance needed to support communities in addressing homelessness with compassion and effectiveness. Municipalities and local partners can expect a collaborative, well-supported process that aligns with provincial strategies and builds on local strengths.

Here's what you can expect when participating:

- **Support from BC Housing:** Coordination and guidance to implement HEART and HEARTH locally. Supports the development of Encampment Response Plans (ERPs) in collaboration with local HEART tables.
- **Collaborative Approach:** Coordinates and maintains open lines of communication with municipal leads and HEART tables to monitor progress and troubleshoot challenges.
- **Access to resources:** Funding for temporary housing, site supports; and tools for planning, coordination, and evaluation.
- **Clear communication:** Regular updates, shared planning tools, and opportunities to provide feedback. Gathers feedback from communities to refine program delivery and share best practices across the province.
- **Data and Evaluation Tools:** Provides tools and templates for coordinated assessments, data sharing, and outcome tracking.

- **Transition Planning:** Works with municipalities to plan for the transition from temporary HEARTH sites to long-term housing solutions.

What Is Expected of Municipalities

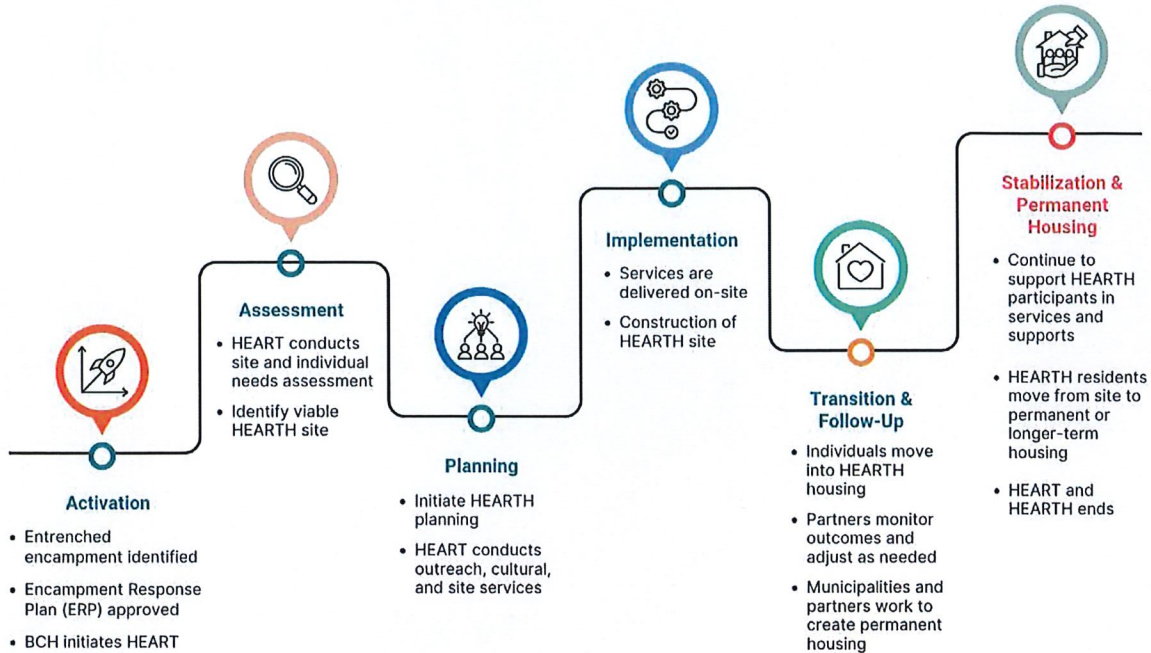
Municipalities are vital partners in the successful implementation of HEART and HEARTH. Your leadership, local knowledge, and operational capacity are essential to delivering coordinated, compassionate, and effective responses to encampments. By working closely with BC Housing, the Ministry, and community partners, municipalities help ensure that temporary housing solutions and support services are responsive to local needs and integrated with broader homelessness strategies.

Here's what your role includes:

- **Local Coordination:** Participate in HEART team planning and operations. Assign municipal staff (e.g., bylaw, engineering, emergency management) to support response efforts.
- **Site Identification and Approvals:** Identify potential sites for temporary housing or services and support the process of gaining council approval where required.
- **Site Logistics:** Assist with site preparation, including safety, hygiene, and ongoing maintenance or cleanup.
- **Community Engagement:** Communicate with residents, businesses, and stakeholders to build understanding and support for encampment response efforts.
- **Data and Insights:** Share local data, trends, and on-the-ground knowledge to inform planning and service delivery.
- **Support Integration:** Help align HEART and HEARTH initiatives with existing local homelessness response strategies and services.
- **Long-Term Housing Planning:** Collaborate with BC Housing and partners to identify and develop permanent housing solutions that support long-term transitions out of homelessness.

HEART and HEARTH Journey

Here's how HEART and HEARTH typically work in communities:



Roles & Responsibilities

Partner	Key Responsibilities
BC Housing	Program coordination, funding, HEART/HEARTH team support, housing and service planning.
Municipalities	Local coordination, site logistics, staff participation, community engagement.
Indigenous Governments	Cultural leadership, HEART planning participation and site selection.
Indigenous Partners	Cultural leadership, ceremony, supports, and guidance.

Health Authorities	Health assessments, mental health and substance use supports.
Non-Profits	Outreach, housing navigation, cultural and social supports.
Law Enforcement	Support safety planning and coordination, where appropriate.

Timeline

While every community's HEART and HEARTH journey is unique, there are common strategies that can help speed up implementation and reduce risks of delay. These tips are based on lessons learned from past encampment responses and are designed to support smoother coordination, faster site activation, and stronger outcomes.

Engage Early and Often

Begin conversations with BC Housing, Indigenous governments and partners, and local service providers as early as possible to build trust and alignment. Confirm that key municipal and First Nations staff are available to participate in HEART planning and implementation.

Identify Land or Sites Early

Proactively explore and assess multiple potential sites for temporary housing and begin internal discussions about zoning and permitting requirements.

Assign a Municipal Lead

Designate a dedicated municipal staff lead to coordinate internally and act as the main point of contact for HEART and HEARTH activities.

Leverage Existing Relationships

Use pre-existing partnerships, agreements, and working groups to fast-track coordination and decision-making. Involve Indigenous governments and community leaders in planning to ensure culturally safe approaches and community buy-in.

Use Available Tools and Templates

Take advantage of BC Housing's planning tools, data templates, and evaluation frameworks to reduce administrative burden.

Maintain Open Communication

Establish regular check-ins with all partners to monitor progress, flag issues early, and adjust plans as needed.

Planning Beyond HEARTH: Building Toward Long-Term Housing Solutions

While HEARTH provides critical temporary housing options to support individuals transitioning out of encampments, it is essential to recognize that HEARTH is not a permanent solution. HEARTH sites are designed to be short-term interventions—typically operating under time-limited lease agreements. The success of the HEARTH and HEARTH program depends on a clear and proactive commitment to long-term housing development that ensures individuals do not return to homelessness once temporary supports conclude.

Why Long-Term Planning Matters

Without a parallel strategy to develop permanent, supportive, and affordable housing, there is a risk that individuals will cycle back into homelessness once HEARTH sites close. Long-term planning ensures that the temporary nature of HEARTH is matched by a sustainable housing pipeline that supports lasting stability.

Setting the Expectation

It is important to communicate clearly with all partners and interest parties—including residents, service providers, and people with lived experience—that HEARTH is a temporary measure. This helps manage expectations and reinforces the shared goal of transitioning individuals into safe, stable, and permanent homes.

Key Considerations for Municipalities

To prepare for the transition beyond HEARTH, municipalities are encouraged to:

- **Integrate HEARTH into their local Broader Housing Strategies:** Align HEARTH efforts with local housing action plans and the provincial [Homes for People Housing Strategy](#) to ensure continuity of care and housing pathways.
- **Identify Permanent Housing Sites and Options Early:** Begin site identification and rezoning processes for permanent supportive or affordable housing while HEARTH is still active.
- **Engage Developers and Non-Profit Housing Providers:** Foster partnerships with housing developers, Indigenous housing organizations, and non-profits to plan and build long-term housing stock.
- **Secure Long-Term Funding:** Work with provincial and federal partners to secure capital and operating funding for permanent housing projects.
- **Plan for Service Continuity:** Ensure that wraparound supports provided at HEARTH sites—such as health care, cultural supports, and housing navigation—are sustained and integrated into long-term housing models.

By embedding long-term housing development into the HEART and HEARTH journey, municipalities can help break the cycle of homelessness and build inclusive communities where everyone has a place to call home.

Markers of Success

To evaluate the impact of HEART and HEARTH initiatives, it is essential to track meaningful outcomes that reflect both immediate improvements and long-term progress. These markers of success help ensure that the program are meeting their goals of compassionate, coordinated, and sustainable responses to homelessness.

HEART Tables: Coordinated Response and Community Impact

- **Established and Active Collaboration Tables:** Functional HEART tables with consistent participation from municipal, Indigenous, health, non-profit, and provincial partners.
- **Rapid Response Capacity:** Demonstrated ability to activate coordinated responses within weeks of encampment identification.
- **Integrated Planning:** Joint development of Encampment Response Plans (ERPs) that reflect local knowledge, cultural safety, and trauma-informed practices.
- **Improved Service Coordination:** Increased alignment between outreach, health, housing, and cultural supports.
- **Community Trust and Engagement:** Positive feedback from community stakeholders and people with lived experience regarding the transparency and responsiveness of HEART efforts.

HEARTH Sites: Temporary Shelter with Purpose

- **Timely Site Activation:** HEARTH sites operational within 8–12 months of community selection.
- **Safe and Dignified Shelter:** Sites meet standards for hygiene, safety, accessibility, and cultural appropriateness.
- **High Utilization Rates:** Majority of available spaces are consistently occupied by individuals transitioning from encampments.
- **Wraparound Supports Delivered:** On-site access to health care, mental health and substance use services, housing navigation, and cultural supports.

Encampment Response: Reducing Harm and Building Pathways

- **Reduction in Encampments:** Fewer individuals sheltering outdoors in areas previously identified as high-risk or high-need.
- **Improved Site Conditions:** Enhanced cleanliness, safety, and community perception of former encampment areas.
- **Minimized Displacement:** Encampment closures are accompanied by offers of shelter and support, not enforcement-only approaches.
- **Crisis Mitigation:** Fewer emergency service calls and police interactions related to encampments.

Transitions to Long-Term Housing or Care

- **Housing Transitions Tracked:** Clear data on the number of individuals who move from HEARTH into permanent housing or long-term care.
- **Sustained Housing Stability:** High rates of housing retention at 6- and 12-month intervals post-transition.
- **Support Continuity:** Individuals continue to receive health, cultural, and social supports after leaving HEARTH.
- **System Integration:** HEARTH and HEART efforts are embedded into broader municipal and provincial housing strategies.

In Closing

Thank you for your commitment to creating compassionate, coordinated responses to homelessness in your community. HEART and HEARTH are more than programs—they are shared efforts grounded in partnership, cultural safety, and the belief that everyone deserves a safe place to call home. Your leadership and collaboration are essential to making this vision a reality. Together, we can reduce harm, build trust, and create lasting pathways to housing and wellbeing for those who need it most.