



November 28, 2019

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : Malcolm Bromley
General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT : **Warming Centre Activations**

Dear Commissioners,

The purpose of this memo is to inform you about the warming centres that will be opened tonight and tomorrow in response to cold weather, including one at the Vancouver Aquatic Centre (located in the multipurpose room on the lower level at the back of the building).

Extreme Weather Response (EWR) is the legislated responsibility of the Province of British Columbia as laid out in the Assistance to Shelter Act. Emergency warming centres are activated as a life-saving response for people sleeping outside during the City's coldest months. They are opened for use on an overnight basis. Everyone is welcome and they can bring their pets, bikes, and carts with them. Hot drinks and snacks will be available, and those with their own bedding may choose to sleep at the facility.

Warming shelters will be open tonight and tomorrow night (November 28 & 29) at the following locations:

- Vancouver Aquatic Centre – 1055 Beach Ave (enter via Seawall), open 10pm to 6am
- Britannia Community Centre – 1739 Venables Street, open 9pm to 8:30am
- Powell Street Getaway – 528 Powell Street, open 9pm to 7am
- Overdose Prevention Society – 58 East Hastings Street, open 11pm to 8am

The following protocol has been developed when Park Board facilities are used as extreme weather response centres:

- Warming centres will be activated by the General Manager of Community Services at “feels like -5 C or below”.
- Warming centres in Park Board facilities will be activated at the discretion of the General Manager of the Park Board in an emergency capacity and only after all shelters and Community Services options are at capacity.
- Operations at Community Centres are limited to a maximum of five consecutive days to allow for building operations to be regulated. Should there be extended need to operate it will be at the discretion of the Park Board General Manager and after assessment of the operational impacts.
- At minimum, 24 hours will be necessary in order to initiate the warming centre operation.
- Scheduling of warming centre hours will be such that, at minimum, two hours between warming centre operations and regular programming is accommodated.



- There will be designated and controlled areas including entrances and washrooms, identified for use.
- Staff from Recreation Services will be on site to open the centre, clean and ensure the facility is safe and secure, however Park Board staff will not be responsible for the operation of the warming centre.
- The warming centre will be operated by Community Services staff. They will be trained by Community Services on the operation of the warming centre and they will be trained by Recreation staff on the emergency procedures of the specific facility.
- Each warming centre will be staffed by a minimum of two Community Services staff plus one security guard for up to twenty guests.
- One extra staff person will be brought on for every fifteen additional people expected.
- Should the centre experience a higher volume of homeless people off hours, a form of security may be required and will be added to the cost of operating a warming centre.
- All costs associated with operation of the warming centre will be covered by Community Services as confirmed in their report to City Council on October 4, 2017.
- The lead organization will be Community Services, with the Park Board team playing a supportive role in facility management.
- The Operations Manual, developed by Park Board staff, must be adhered to by the operators of the warming centres.

Park Board staff have been working closely with Community Services staff and community partners in order to prepare for the upcoming winter season, which includes supporting the operation of warming centres at Park Board facilities as needed per the protocol outlined above. The City's Outreach staff continue to be at Oppenheimer Park regularly and are working to move people indoors. Currently, the team is working with approximately 50 people who are experiencing homelessness and are frequently sleeping in the park.

Community centres and other public buildings are available during regular operating hours as spaces to warm-up during the day.

Regards,

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

Malcolm Bromley
General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

/dp/clc

Copy to: PB Senior Leadership Team
PB Recreation Leadership Team
PB Communications