



January 20, 2021

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners

FROM : Donnie Rosa - General Manager, Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

SUBJECT : **Warming Centre Activations in Park Board Facilities – Board Briefing Memo**

Dear Commissioners,

The purpose of this memo is to inform you that in response to expected cold temperatures, staff are monitoring the weather forecast and are preparing to open warming centres on the nights of January 21-27 if needed, including two at Park Board facilities.

Winter conditions in Vancouver can give rise to the need for emergency warming centres to be open and available for the use of residents on an overnight basis. 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. In the event temperatures fall below -5 degrees Celsius, they are opened for use on an overnight basis and everyone is welcome. Hot drinks and snacks will be available, and those with their own bedding may choose to sleep at the facility. Community centres and other public buildings are also available during their opening hours as spaces to warm-up during the day.

The Recreation team has developed COVID-19 Safety Plans and coordinated the necessary logistics to open warming centres at the following Park Board facilities:

- **Vancouver Aquatic Centre:** 1055 Beach Ave (enter via Seawall); 10pm to 7am
- **Creekside Community Recreation Centre:** 1 Athletes Way; 10pm to 7am

The City of Vancouver will also be opening warming shelters at the following locations:

- Britannia Community Centre: 1739 Venables Street; 9pm to 8:30am
- Powell Street Getaway: 528 Powell Street; 9pm to 7am

For your reference, following is the protocol developed relative to the use of Park Board facilities 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.
- COVID-19 Safety Plans have been revised to include warming shelter operations.

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 visit parks regularly and will be working to move people indoors when the temperature drops.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Donnie Rosa", with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Donnie Rosa (*she/her they/them*)
General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

/tc/dp/clc

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