



December 23, 2021

MEMO TO : Park Board Commissioners
FROM : Donnie Rosa, General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation
SUBJECT : Warming Centres at Park Board Facilities

Dear Commissioners,

The purpose of this memo is to provide Commissioners with an update regarding warming centres that will be opened in response to cold weather.

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.

Residents experiencing homelessness will be urged to use the City's warming centres in the event of weather that is below -5 degrees. Warming centres would only be activated under these conditions as a life-saving response for people sleeping outside during the City's coldest months.

The Recreation team is currently working on logistics, including safe operating procedures, to open a warming centre at the following Park Board location:

- **West End Community Centre** (870 Denman St.): Open Dec. 24-25 11 pm to 9 am, each day and other dates as needed until Jan 3, 2022 (hours TBD)

As a side note, the West End Community Centre Association (WECCA) has had numerous concerns, due to their previous experience, with the proposed warming centre activation. City of Vancouver and Park Board staff teams have worked hard to address all of those concerns. As of today, WECCA has voted and verbally agreed to use this time (Dec 24, 2021 - Jan 3, 2022) as a trial for the warming centre activation.

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

- **Britannia Community Centre (Gym D)** (1661 Napier St.): Open Dec. 24 8 pm to 8 am, Dec. 25 8 pm to 8 am, Dec. 26 8 pm to 6:30 am
- **Powell Street Getaway** (528 Powell St.): Open daily 9 pm to 7 am
- **Odd Fellows Lodge** (1443 W 8th Ave.): Open daily 10 pm to 8 am



Hot drinks and snacks will be available at warming centres, and those with their own bedding may choose to sleep at the facility.

Community Centres and other public buildings are available during their opening hours as spaces to warm up during the day.

The City's Outreach staff continue to visit parks regularly and will be working to move people indoors when the temperature drops.

The following protocol has been 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.
- 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 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 sixteen guests.
- The Homelessness Services Outreach team will support transition of closing the warming centre at the end of each night.
- 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 The ACCS Homelessness Services team, must be adhered to by the operators of the warming centres.



In summary, Park Board staff have been working closely with Community Services staff and community partners in order to prepare for the upcoming winter season. Staff are prepared to support the operation of a warming centre at one or more of our facilities with the protocol as outlined above.

Regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, consisting of several overlapping loops and a long horizontal stroke extending to the right.

Donnie Rosa
General Manager - Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation

DR/JL

Copy to: PB Senior Leadership Team
PB Communications
Jessica Land