

Request for Decision



To: Regular Meeting
From: **Development, Engineering & Planning**
Date: November 25, 2019
Subject: Emergency Shelter and Supportive Housing Options
Recommendation: **THAT Council approve the definitions for Extreme Weather Response Shelter, Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing and Supportive Housing and direct staff to move forward with the legislative requirements to amend Zoning Bylaw 2039 to include the definitions.**

THAT Council consider the areas within the City best suited for locating Extreme Weather Response Shelters, Emergency Shelters, Transitional Housing units and Supportive Housing units.

Background

As per council's direction, staff submitted a comprehensive report to council at the October 21, 2019 Regular Council meeting. The staff report provided information on what other communities are doing and provided a draft process for a framework to gather information to inform the decisions around locations for emergency shelters.

Council has also directed staff to add definitions for extreme cold weather shelter, emergency shelter, transitional housing and supportive housing to the Zoning Bylaw.

Since funding for emergency shelters and supportive housing is often funded fully or partially by senior levels of government through agencies such as BC Housing, the definitions presented by staff in this report are closely aligned with BC Housing definitions. It is anticipated that adoption of zoning bylaw definitions that are consistent with those used by funding agencies should eliminate potential funding delays that may arise due to confusion in definitions.

As outlined in the October 21, 2019 staff memo there are many criteria for evaluating suitable locations for Extreme Weather Response Shelters, Emergency Shelters, Transitional Housing units and Supportive Housing units. The aforementioned is also shown in the many approaches that have been taken by communities, large and small, to determine locations for emergency shelters and supportive housing.

Staff went through a Geographic Information Systems (GIS) exercise. Limited criteria were put into an ArcGIS model to show, pictorially, locations within City of Grand Forks boundaries that met some location criteria for extreme weather response shelters, emergency shelters, transitional housing, and supportive housing. The results in

Appendix 1 through 3 show that when applying a small number of arbitrary distance-based criteria, nearly the entire City is eliminated regarding potential locations.

Combining the results of the above GIS exercise and drawing on the experiences and practices of other communities informed the staff recommendation that council use operational / design and adjacency criteria rather than distance-based criteria to determine the best locations for extreme weather response shelters, emergency shelters, transitional housing and supportive housing. A draft bylaw is attached as Appendix 4.

DEFINITIONS

Table 2 below contains recommended definitions for Extreme Weather Response Shelter, Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing, and Supportive Housing. These definitions are consistent with BC Housing definitions.

As stated before, since extreme weather response shelter, emergency shelter, transitional housing and supportive housing is often funded fully or partially by senior levels of government through agencies such as BC Housing, staff recommends using definitions that are consistent with BC Housing definitions as this may reduce potential for funding delays that could arise due to confusion in definitions. Also, this could reduce confusion when communicating internally and externally.

Table 2: Definition Options (Based on BC HOUSING DEFINITIONS)		
	DEFINITION	MEANING
1	EXTREME WEATHER RESPONSE SHELTER	Means an Emergency Shelter that is open in the winter when a local community declares an alert, under the Assistance to Shelter Act, that sleeping outside could threaten health and safety. During an alert they are open every night.
2	EMERGENCY SHELTER	Means shelters that are temporary but immediate places to stay for anyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness. Emergency Shelter includes Year-Round Emergency Shelter & Temporary Winter Emergency Shelter
3	TRANSITIONAL HOUSING	Means short term housing for all genders to stay between 30 days to three years.
4	SUPPORTIVE HOUSING	Means subsidized housing with on-site supports. For people who may have mental and physical health conditions, substance use and/or other challenges that puts you at higher risk of homelessness.

WHAT ARE OTHER COMMUNITIES DOING – EXTREME WEATHER RESPONSE & EMERGENCY SHELTERS

There are often complex reasons that drive the need for extreme weather response shelters, emergency shelters, transitional housing and supportive housing therefore it is not surprising that many different approaches have been taken to provide these housing options.

Table 1 below summarizes siting of emergency shelters and whether they are defined in the respective zoning bylaws:

Table 1: Emergency Shelter Locations - What are Other Communities Doing?		
ZONE	COMMUNITIES	DEFINED IN ZONING BYLAW
Commercial	Nelson, Kamloops, Kelowna (2 shelters), Penticton, Trail, Port Hardy	YES
Commercial	William's Lake, Dawson Creek, Chetwynd, Fort St. James	NO
Public Areas	Campbell River	NO
Comprehensive Development - Supportive Housing	Cranbrook	YES
Comprehensive Development – Mixed Institutional, Commercial, Tourist Commercial	Port Hardy	NO
INSTITUTIONAL	Revelstoke (in progress)	NO

Some communities have taken the approach that there should be no restriction on the location of emergency shelters throughout the community. Other communities have taken the approach that emergency shelters are best suited for the commercial core areas of the community. Still other communities have spot zoning to allow for emergency Shelters. A more detailed table showing what other communities are doing is attached as Appendix 5.

LOCATION CRITERIA - EXTREME WEATHER RESPONSE & EMERGENCY SHELTERS

The following are some of the criteria or considerations that were articulated at the October 30th, 2019 meeting of the Grand Forks Social Service Advisory Group (GFSSAG) about locating an emergency shelter in various areas of the community:

1. Proximity to services as well as handicapped access
2. Management of the shelter – proven operator
3. Consideration for migration to the commercial core and for the zone hosting the shelter
4. Reliable transportation
5. Availability of appropriate building stock
6. Security and nuisance risk in the pedestrian corridor to the shelter.

In addition to the criteria and considerations identified at the GFSSAG meeting, and although not exhaustive, here are some additional criteria and considerations that staff considered running in an ArcGIS model to attempt to show, pictorially, locations within the City of Grand Forks boundaries that would meet all the relevant location criteria for Extreme Weather Response Shelters, Emergency Shelters, Transitional Houses and Supportive Housing:

1. Proximity to an active transportation network
2. Operating and development costs
3. Proximity to amenities such as grocery stores, recreation, and pharmacies
4. Proximity and availability of work
5. Proximity of emergency medical services
6. Proximity and availability of policing and enforcement resources
7. Proximity to schools
8. Proximity to businesses
9. Proximity to residential areas.
10. Proximity to places of worship.

A Geographic Information Systems (GIS) model was used to produce Appendix 1, Appendix 2 and Appendix 3.

The area highlighted in green in Appendix 1 is the area covered by a 400m buffer around churches and 7500 Donaldson Drive.

The area highlighted in green in Appendix 2 is the area covered by a 50m buffer to the Core Commercial (CC) zone, Single & Two Family Residential (R-1) zone, Single Family Residential (R-1A) zone, schools & recreation facilities.

The area highlighted in green in Appendix 3 is the area covered by a 50m buffer around CC, R-1, R-1A & a 500m buffer around schools and recreation facilities.

As shown in Appendices 1 through 3, there are few locations available within City boundaries that meet the limited criteria, and areas that meet the criteria are constrained

by inadequate infrastructure (watermains, sewer mains, storm mains, sidewalks, transportation), proximity to or located in the floodplain, and no or inadequate supply of buildings suitable for the purpose.

USING OPERATIONAL/DESIGN AND ADJACENCY CRITERIA - EXTREME WEATHER RESPONSE AND EMERGENCY SHELTERS

Rather than using distance-based criteria to determine suitable locations for Extreme Weather Response Shelters and Emergency Shelters, staff suggest that a novel and more pragmatic approach may be for council to look at solving the problem in a more holistic manner. Using this approach, council may consider adding Extreme Weather Response Shelter and Emergency Shelter as a principal use throughout the city, and applying an overlay in the Zoning Bylaw using operational/design and adjacency criteria and/or regulations to the official community plan and/or the zoning bylaw.

The administration of the operational/design guidelines and adjacency criteria may be through a committee of council and/or community members set up for that purpose; similar to a building scheme evaluation committee.

Operational/design and adjacency criteria may include but not be limited to:

1. Not adjacent to single family homes without sufficient buy in
2. Public Notice and Public Hearing requirement
3. Commitment to providing support services
4. Provision of onsite security
5. Provision and commitment to increased neighbourhood/pedestrian corridor security
6. Provision of minimum transportation levels
7. Adequate storage for personal belongings
8. Courtyard for residents
9. Supports for increasing employability
10. Good neighbour agreement
11. Provider with proven track record and/or appropriate supports to achieve success in areas where residential is a permitted use.

LOCATION CRITERIA - TRANSITIONAL HOUSING AND SUPPORTIVE HOUSING

Transitional Housing and Supportive Housing are intended to provide medium to long term housing solutions. These types of housing options may be best suited to zones within the City that allow for residential use, scaled as appropriate to the particular zone.

Benefits or Impacts

General

A continuum of housing helps to make a more livable community.

Strategic Impact



Community Engagement

- Council can engage the public through public hearing(s) during the bylaw adoption process or alternative processes



Community Livability

- Having a stock of a variety of housing options helps to create a more vibrant and livable community



Economic Growth

- More opportunity for a variety of different housing forms may allow increased participation in the local economy.



Fiscal Responsibility

- Resources can be directed toward housing rather than policing, enforcement and assistance.

Policy/Legislation

Zoning Bylaw 2039, Official Community Plan Bylaw 1919, Assistance to Shelter Act, BC Housing Design Guidelines.

Attachments

Appendix 1 – GIS Map showing 400m buffer around churches & 7500 Donaldson Drive.

Appendix 2 – GIS Map showing 50m buffer around CC, R-1, R-1A zones, schools and recreation facilities.

Appendix 3 – GIS Map showing 50m buffer around CC, R-1, R-1A and 500m buffer around schools and recreation facilities.

Appendix 4 – DRAFT zoning Amendment Bylaw

Appendix 5 – What Are Other Communities Doing Regarding Emergency Shelters

Recommendation

THAT Council approve the definitions for Extreme Weather Response Shelter, Emergency Shelter, Transitional Housing and Supportive Housing and direct staff to move forward with the legislative requirements to amend Zoning Bylaw 2039 to include the definitions.

THAT Council consider the areas within the City best suited for locating Extreme Weather Response Shelters, Emergency Shelters, Transitional Housing units and Supportive Housing units.

Options

1. THAT Council accepts the report.
2. THAT Council does not accept the report.
3. THAT Council refers the matter back to staff for further information.

Report Approval Details

Document Title:	20191125 ZA1911 Supportive Emergency Housing RFD.docx
Attachments:	- 20191125-Z1911-Appendix1 Bylaw2039A11.pdf - 20191125-Z1911-Appendix2 Bylaw2039A11.pdf - 20191125-Z1911-Appendix3 Bylaw2039A11.pdf - 20191125-Z1911-Appendix4 Bylaw2039A11.pdf - 20191125-Z1911-Appendix5 Bylaw2039A11.pdf
Final Approval Date:	Nov 23, 2019

This report and all of its attachments were approved and signed as outlined below:

Dolores Sheets - Nov 22, 2019 - 5:26 PM

No Signature - Task assigned to Ron Mattiussi was completed by assistant Daniel Drexler

Ron Mattiussi - Nov 23, 2019 - 1:40 PM