



Address
City, BC
Postal Code

November 27, 2019

Dear neighbour,

We are writing to let you know that BC Housing, with support from the City of West Kelowna, has been working to respond to an urgent need for shelter for people experiencing and at risk of homelessness in the community. A potential location has been identified for a temporary winter shelter. BC Housing has submitted a Temporary Use Permit (TUP) application to the City for a temporary winter shelter to be located at **1160 Stevens Road**. Given the urgent need for a shelter this winter, this proposal will be brought to City Council for a Public Hearing on **December 10 at 1:30pm**. Our goal is to open the shelter by early 2020.

The proposed temporary winter shelter would provide safe secure spaces for up to 40 people experiencing homelessness in West Kelowna. Trailers would be brought onto the empty lot for bunk beds, showers, toilets and amenity space. Meals would be brought in as there would be no cooking facilities on-site.

Experienced local provider, the West Kelowna Shelter Society (WKSS), would operate the shelter. WKSS has been effectively managing shelter and housing at 3672 Brown Road since December 2018. For the winter shelter, staff would be on site 24 hours a day, seven days a week. Interior Health would also provide health services based on individual needs.

We welcome any questions you may have at communityrelations@bchousing.org.



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

November 2019

Why was this location chosen?

The City of West Kelowna reviewed and suggested several available locations with BC Housing to determine the best possible fit for a temporary winter shelter, as there is not an extensive inventory of available lots. This review included the few lots that could accommodate the appropriate temporary trailers, site utilities, close to public transit, accessibility to existing community and social services and other neighbourhood factors. The 1160 Stevens Road location is privately owned and was one of the few lots available where a temporary lease agreement could be completed by BC Housing. The City is pleased that BC Housing is conducting outreach in the local area about how the temporary winter shelter is operated, community integration and how the community can also help those less fortunate who access the site.

What does 'temporary' mean?

Temporary winter shelters generally operate from November 1 through March 31. This temporary winter shelter for West Kelowna would open by early 2020 and close on March 31, 2020.

How will people access this location?

There are bus stops located on Stevens Road near the Westlake intersection and near the Highway 97 and Westlake intersection area.

Who will be managing the shelter?

The West Kelowna Shelter Society would operate this shelter. Their vision is to minimize the impacts of homelessness in our community by providing temporary seasonal shelter and resources to the homeless and at risk among us. It is our goal that the services we offer should involve those in need of assistance, and be delivered with quality, dignity and respect.

Who will be staying at this shelter?

Only people who are experiencing homelessness would be eligible to stay at the temporary shelter. The intake process would prioritize West Kelowna residents. The 2018 Westside Point-In-Time Count Report found 72 people experiencing homelessness; 42% unsheltered; 61% identify as Indigenous; 72% chronically homeless (6 months+); and 55% have been homeless for <5 years.

Do children or families stay here?

People would need to be over the age of 19. Youth or families who are in need would be connected with the appropriate community resources.

What in/out abilities would clients have?

Outside of some restricted overnight hours (to be determined) all people staying at the shelter would have in and out abilities. Staff would operate the shelter to ensure minimal disruptive impact on the neighbourhood. Having staff on site 24/7 ensures that in/out activity is constantly monitored.

Can anyone come to the shelter at any time of day or night for a bed? Or is there a set time for intake?

Intake hours are still being determined, however operations would be planned to avoid line ups outside of the building.



Could people staying at the shelter have guests?

No visitors would be allowed to the shelter (special arrangements would be made to connect with family through outreach workers.)

What happens if the shelter is full and you need to turn someone away?

The shelter will have a capacity of 40 beds, however, we are hopeful that this number of beds will be sufficient to provide space for those experiencing homelessness in West Kelowna.

How is entry/exit of people managed/monitored?

Staff is aware of the entry and exit of people staying at the shelter through cameras and exterior door buzzers. Staff do intake and discharge guests through the BC Housing database.

How will disruptive behaviour in the outdoor area be dealt with?

The West Kelowna Shelter Society has procedures for trained shelter staff to work with any disruptive behaviours in or out of the immediate shelter area. Disruptive behaviours would be addressed based on the individual circumstance of the shelter guest and the severity of the behaviour.

What sort of monitoring would staff do outside of the building?

Staff would monitor and move along any non-shelter guests. Staff would also sweep the streets daily for garbage as a courtesy to neighbours.

What does a typical day look like at a shelter?

Some general daily shelter operations are consistent (i.e., staffing, meals, programming, etc.). However, other activities of daily life are different for each person staying at a shelter. Some people have employment and a set routine, while others may be in transition and able to move into other types of housing in the community. Others require more stabilizing, relationship building, and community connections which can be a slower process.

Are pets allowed in the shelter?

Pets would be welcome, as long as they are not causing a disturbance or putting people at risk of harm (as deemed by staff.)

Is there storage for people with carts?

BC Housing is planning to provide storage space for personal belongings, including carts, for guests staying at the shelter.

Are people allowed to use drugs inside the shelter?

BC Housing, Interior Health, and the West Kelowna Shelter Society work from a Housing First principle. The goal is to provide stable shelter/housing, and then work with people to promote recovery and well-being. If we exclude people with substance use issues, they would remain on the street with deteriorating health. Harm reduction best practices, based on Interior Health's guidance, would be followed within the shelter in order to prevent overdoses. This means drug-use will be permitted on site however only in a designated area that would be monitored by staff and require safe-disposal of needles. Although we anticipate most drug-use will happen inside the shelter, the society would be sweeping the streets daily for garbage as a courtesy to neighbours.



How will this shelter benefit the community?

People are living on the streets, in parks, in cars and precariously housed in our community. These new temporary winter shelter beds would bring people in from the cold weather and provide a gateway to services and housing options. Without access to shelter and housing options, people will continue to live on the street with deteriorating health.

Who is funding the shelter?

BC Housing would pay for the lease, construction and operations. The West Kelowna Shelter Society would manage the shelter.

How will homelessness be addressed longer term in the City of West Kelowna?

BC Housing is working with the City of West Kelowna and Westbank First Nation on plans for safe, secure housing for West Kelowna residents.

What are the next steps?

The Temporary Use Permit (TUP) application will be heard by West Kelowna City Council on December 10 at 1:30pm. In the meantime, due to the urgency to opening this important winter shelter resource, BC Housing is working on planning for construction including trailer installation and utilities, and with West Kelowna Shelter Society on planning for operations. If the TUP application is approved, work would begin on-site immediately with the goal of opening by early 2020.