

# Request for Decision



**To:** Mayor and Council **File No:**  
**Meeting Date:** December 18, 2017  
**From:** Peter de Verteuil, Chief Administrative Officer  
**Re:** United Way Request for Homeless Warming Station at McAdam Park

## RECOMMENDATION:

### Either

- 1) That Council NOT approve the use of the McAdam Park changerooms for a Warming Station between the hours of 7am and 7pm, if not required by regular users during that time.

And That Council direct staff to include a new hot water tank for the McAdam Park change rooms at a cost of \$11,000 in the 2018 Capital Budget.

### Or

- 2) That Council defer approval in principle for the use of the McAdam Park changerooms for a Warming Station until further details on the operations of the station are provided to Council, particularly to address neighbourhood concerns.

And That Council direct staff to include a new hot water tank for the McAdam Park change rooms at a cost of \$11,000 in the 2018 Capital Budget.

### Or

- 3) That Council approve in principle the use of the McAdam Park changerooms for a Warming Station between the hours of 7am and 7pm, if not required by regular users during that time.

And That Council approve the contribution of power, heat and water for the facility.

And That Council give early budget approval for a new hot water tank for the McAdam Park change rooms at a cost of \$11,000.

## BACKGROUND:

On November 20, 2017 Council considered a request by the United Way – Central & Northern Vancouver Island to use the McAdam Park change rooms as a warming station, based on a model used in Nanaimo (Harris House) that is supported through a combination of provincial and health care funding. The United Way has indicated they need an approved location prior to funding approval, and is therefore requesting the consideration of Council.

In the letter, the United Way described a warming station as a “supported, daytime drop-in space serving citizens who are without places, to take the chill from their bones and shelter from the cold,” through use of the change rooms and showers at McAdam Park. The hours of operation would be outside the hours required by sports teams.

Council passed the following motion:

*That Council direct staff to bring forward a report on the financial and community impacts of establishing of a warming station, as requested by the United Way.*

In the United Way letter, they note their understanding that the change rooms were used for this purpose in the past. To clarify, in 2006 the change rooms were used for overnight accommodations, not daytime warming or showers, and individuals were bused to the House of Friendship for showers and breakfast.

Over the weekend of November 25, 2006, the change rooms were an emergency shelter due to the extreme cold weather, and was extended to Wednesday November 29, 2006 until the 7th Day Adventist Church building was ready to be used as the emergency shelter, and individuals continued to be bused to the House of Friendship for showers and breakfast. Later the shelter was moved from the Church to the Margaret Moss basement (it was empty at the time), prior to the construction of Warmland House. However, the House of Friendship is only serving First Nations clients at this time.

Currently the City pays the following for operating costs of the property:

Heat (propane)	\$1,100
Water	\$1,800
Hydro	\$7,000 (includes the lights for the fields)
Janitorial	\$8,184

Also of note, the hot water tank at McAdam stopped working earlier in 2017. Public Works has spent several months investigating replacing the tank, including options such as an on-demand hot water system. Due to the amount of hot water needed, an on-demand system will not be adequate. The replacement options and costs for the tank were only recently completed. A new hot water tank, along with a plumber and gas fitter to install it (it is a propane system, not electric) will cost just under \$11,000 and will take 4 weeks from the date of purchase to the date of installation.

Prior to 2013, the general use washrooms in the building were closed year round for public use except during events. Since 2013 the general use washrooms at McAdam have been open from May 1 to October 31 each year, and closed over the winter. The vandalism of the public washrooms since 2013 has not been substantial. However, the number users of the park and general activity in the summer months may assist in lowering vandalism.

### **ANALYSIS:**

Subsequent to Council's resolution in November, staff asked the United Way several questions and follow up questions, so as to provide Council with as much information as possible in considering the request.

Based on the answers provided below, it appears the operations plan is not fully developed, particularly in those areas that might help address neighbourhood concerns.

1. Who will be the applicant (for provincial funding)?

*The Cowichan Coalition to Address Homelessness and Housing and an appropriate Provincial agency (TBD) – Island Health operates the facility in Nanaimo (Harris House).*

2. Who will be the operator?

*As above*

3. Is the request to the City for shower facilities only, or a warming station as well?

*The request to the City is for the use of McAdam fieldhouse as a daytime warming shelter for people experiencing homelessness, and in particular to those who are sleeping out-of-doors, who are in need of a place to shower, warm up, and dry off.*

4. What are the desired hours of operation?

*7am to 7pm, when possible*

5. When is the anticipated start date?

*As soon as possible*

6. How many individuals are you planning for (to accommodate)?

*There were 80 absolute homeless identified in the Point-in-time count, with approximately 20 living rough.*

7. Who is the warming station geared towards (Youth? Women? Everyone?)?

*Everyone who comes*

8. How many staff people would be on site?

*At least 3 at a time would be needed, but would also depend on numbers accessing the facility.*

9. Do you have the capacity to fund the additional janitorial costs and needle sweeps?

*Our community has existing outreach teams to assist in needle sweeps and there are initiatives in place at this time that engage the street community as volunteers to assist in needle sweeps. If this initiative goes ahead, it would ensure proper capacity is in place for janitorial services and needle sweeps, in addition to harm reduction and health supports for the community members in need.*

10. Would the grant cover increased operating costs?

*A grant application or funding partner would anticipate covering hard and soft costs beyond those the City was willing and/or able to provide.*

11. How would you plan to discourage the individuals congregating in the area outside the hours the services are being provided?

*Paraphrased (No specific plans at this time. We would consult with Harris House in Nanaimo to review their practices).*

12. What is the anticipated length of stay, on average, for individuals? What restrictions, if any, would there be on drug use prior to, or at the facility?

*The center would be open from 7am to 7pm, when possible. We would consult with Harris House in Nanaimo to learn how they determine length of stay, monitor the site and surrounding areas, etc. Drug use wouldn't be allowed in the warming shelter, but we couldn't control what they did before arriving or after they leave.*

13. Are there other supports/referrals that would be provided to the individuals attending, or is it simply intended to warm them up and have them move on?

*The staff would be trained professionals who could provide a certain level of support to clients on-site and they would most certainly be equipped with information to provide referrals.*

14. Please let me know if you have yet contacted Island Health to determine their willingness to participate

*We feel there is a critical need for it in our community during the winter months. That being said, we haven't been too fruitful with the funding source yet, but are still working on that.*

15. Is Council approval necessary prior to the application, or can council approval be done after the applicant has secured the provincial funding?

*Council would need to express a willingness to support the initiative prior to the confirmation of funding and an appropriate operator.*

16. Does Harris House have any FAQs about their operations that they put together when they were initiated?

*Paraphrased (We are requesting this information).*

## **Community Feedback**


Since Council passed the resolution requesting further information before considering the United Way request, the community/neighbourhood concerns have grown quickly. The City created the attached information sheet to inform people of the status of the United Way request.

The City has received the attached feedback on the concept of a warming station at McAdam Park:

- 4 letters against (went to Council in Fri, Dec 8th Info Pkg)
- 1 letter against + Petitions with a total of 282 signatures
- 1 phone call indicating support for the concept

**IMPLICATIONS:**

**Financial:** Based on recommendation #2, relatively minor amount of increase heat, hot water, and Hydro. \$11,000 for replacement of the hot water tank will be necessary whether a warming station proceeds or not.



DOF Signature

**Policy/Legislation:** N/A

**Strategic Priority:** Not a Strategic Priority.

**Sustainability:** N/A

**Communication:** Staff will communicate Council's decision to the neighbourhood, the United way, and on the City's website and facebook site.

**Staffing Implications:** As the operations would be by a third party, it is not anticipated that staff time would be significant regarding the operations themselves. It is not know how much community impact was felt in Nanaimo and as a result it is unknown if staff will see an increase in bylaw complaints.

**ATTACHMENTS:**

1. United Way Letter dated November 11, 2017
2. Information Sheet on United Way request - McAdam Park Warming Station
3. Correspondence - 4 letters against (went to Council in Fri, Dec 8th Info Pkg)
4. Correspondence - 1 letter against + Petitions with a total of 282 signatures

Respectfully submitted,



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Peter de Verteuil, CAO