

OCTOBER 11, 2024

CHANGES TO OVERNIGHT TEMPORARY SHELTER LOCATIONS IN CAMPBELL RIVER

Newly permitted locations at 900 Alder Street-City Hall, and seasonally at Robert Ostler Park.

In keeping with Campbell River's commitment to a safe and healthy community, temporary overnight sheltering is no longer available at 1299 Homewood Road, as the City prepares for the opening of the 40-unit Homewood rapid housing initiative. At the Council Meeting on October 10, Council adopted Public Nuisance Amendment Bylaw No. 3965, 2024, which outlines two City-owned downtown locations where temporary overnight sheltering will be permitted.

This temporary measure is a response to the legal requirements from the Province for local governments to provide temporary shelter for people experiencing homelessness and the ongoing crisis in Campbell River. Temporary overnight shelter is now permitted year-round in a section of 900 Alder Street, City Hall, and seasonally in a portion of 945 Island Highway, Robert Ostler Park, from November 1 to March 31. The specific allowable times for temporary shelters are from 7 p.m. to 8 a.m. Revisions to the bylaw and strategic enhancements to enforcement will ensure that these areas are maintained for existing daytime use by all residents.

"As the Province legally requires local governments to provide temporary shelter for people experiencing homelessness, Council reviewed over a dozen City-owned options. The final locations were selected as they balance community safety considerations," says Mayor Kermit Dahl. "Being close to municipal buildings like City Hall shows our willingness to walk our talk. We tried to limit exposure to commercial and residential areas as much as possible, and we will manage these new locations in a way that enhances community safety for all. We will also continue to work with and lobby other levels of government for the additional support we need to address homelessness in Campbell River."

The newly permitted sites reflect an enhanced approach to managing temporary overnight shelter locations in Campbell River that will further support community safety for all. City bylaw officers, contract security and the RCMP will monitor each site daily and will be empowered to take steps to address concerns as they arise.

"The 2023 Point-in-Time homeless count identified 197 people as experiencing homelessness of various forms in Campbell River. Projects like Homewood, the rapid housing initiative, are helping to reduce homelessness in our community, but locations for temporary overnight shelter must still be identified," says Jeff Ford, Director of Community Safety. "The City will closely monitor the locations and adapt the City's response as needed while continuing to explore alternatives with community partners and the Province."

Designating specific locations where overnight shelter is permissible makes it easier for the City to actively monitor and patrol, which provides clarity to Campbell River residents and access for vulnerable citizens to a location that is as safe as possible. It also allows the City to enforce restrictions against sheltering and encampments elsewhere.

Mayor, Council, and City leadership share many of the concerns voiced by residents relating to the complex challenges Campbell River faces, including mental health, addictions, and homelessness. Community safety and downtown revitalization remain top priorities for Council, and the City will continue to work to foster a safe and inclusive environment for all residents throughout this process.

As a result of the City Hall location, vehicle traffic in the City Hall parking lot will become two-way in areas where it was previously one-way, and one entrance will be unavailable. Visitors are encouraged to review the enclosed map ahead of their next visit.

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Contact: Jeff Ford, Director of Community Safety | 250-204-6520 | jeff.ford@campbellriver.ca

UPDATED CITY HALL PARKING MAP

