

ADMINISTRATIVE REPORT TO COUNCIL

ON

INTEGRATION OF HEALTH SERVICES WITH SHELTERS AND SOCIAL HOUSING

PURPOSE

The purpose of this report is to update Council on community conversations and next steps to support increased health, mental health, and substance use services at shelters and supportive housing sites.

COUNCIL STRATEGIC PLAN

This report supports Council's strategic priorities and areas of focus regarding:

- **Governance and Accountability**
 - Community Engagement: We are committed to engaging and connecting with Kamloops residents and stakeholders.
 - External Relationships: We understand the importance of maintaining and improving key relationships.
- **Livability**
 - Healthy Community: We foster an environment that supports and promotes healthy living through recreation, community, and social connection.
 - Housing: We focus on improving diversity and access throughout the housing continuum.
 - Inclusivity: We are committed to supporting inclusivity, diversity, and accessibility in our community.
 - Safety: We recognize the importance of a safe and secure community.
- **Vibrant Economy**
 - Partnerships: We continue to nurture partnerships with key agencies and organizations.

SUMMARY

At the June 14, 2022, Regular Council Meeting, Council passed a motion requesting a joint meeting with the Minister of Health, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and the Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Housing. The intent of the meeting would be twofold—to request a review of existing housing, health, and mental health and addiction services in Kamloops to identify service gaps and to request a commitment to act collaboratively to develop, resource, and implement a plan to address any identified needs.

Systemic Crises

The closure of storefronts and emptying of the public realm during the COVID-19 pandemic contributed to an increased visibility of social issues, including homelessness and mental illness. These issues are the most visible sign of larger systemic crises, including the housing affordability crisis and the toxic drug supply crisis, that are placing significant strain on the social infrastructure of communities across the country. Addressing these broader crises will require

the coordinated efforts of all levels of government and all sectors of the economy to identify and implement viable, long-term solutions.

Urgent Response

There are urgent response efforts that can be and are being undertaken at the local, regional, and provincial levels to address existing homelessness in Kamloops and other communities. Urgent response efforts include providing social infrastructure assets like shelters, transitional and supportive housing, complex care housing, detox beds and treatment facilities, and sobering and assessment centres that can support stabilization, rehabilitation, recovery, and reintegration.

Urgent response also includes street outreach programs and community-based services to connect people experiencing homelessness to the built social infrastructure assets noted above. Among other initiatives, Council has supported the Envision outreach shuttle which provides outreach and transportation to shelters, using grant funding; authorized using City-owned sites for day spaces, shelters, and temporary supportive housing; and supported establishing a street outreach and response program that will pair Community Service Officers with street outreach workers from local social agencies.

Calls for Service and Need for Health Services

Social infrastructure assets that provide housing and/or services to the most vulnerable community members can be expected to experience health, mental health, and substance use incidents. Currently, shelter guests and supportive housing residents generally access health services via referrals to off-site health and/or mental health and substance use services. When health emergencies occur, staff will make calls for service to emergency services. In the motion passed at the June 14, 2022, Regular Council Meeting and in prior discussions, Council has expressed concern with the number of medical calls for service to shelter and supportive housing sites.

The Penticton Supportive Housing Review Summary Report (2022) that was cited in the notice of motion brought forward at the May 31, 2022, Regular Council Meeting, notes in its conclusion that “improved access to mental health and treatment/recovery programs were identified as a key need.” Feedback from conversations with shelter and supportive housing operators in Kamloops echo much of what was expressed in the Penticton report. Local service providers note that most calls for service are related to mental health and substance use incidents. Service providers anticipate that having health and/or mental health staff hours and resources allocated to shelters and supportive housing sites would both reduce calls for service and improve recovery rates. The need for increased health, mental health, and substance use services and supports at shelters and supportive housing sites has also been emphasized by protective and emergency service representatives at Safe and Secure Kamloops meetings.

Provincial Jurisdiction

Shelter and social housing development and operations are under the jurisdiction of BC Housing. The City has established a memorandum of understanding with BC Housing that provides a coordinated framework to guide the planning, development, operations, and communications regarding future shelter, supportive housing, and affordable rental housing.

BC Housing has added nearly 100 year-round shelter spaces, 227 supportive housing units, and nearly 270 affordable rental housing units in Kamloops over the past five years. As stated in the memorandum of understanding, 67 supportive housing units and 84 affordable rental housing units are in development, and other sites are identified for future supportive and affordable housing development.

Health services, including primary care, mental health, and substance use services, generally fall under the jurisdiction of the Ministry of Health via Interior Health. Council continues to advocate to the Province for additional needed social infrastructure assets that are primarily under Interior Health's jurisdiction to resource and implement, including complex care housing, detox beds, treatment and recovery facilities, a sobering and assessment centre, and additional mental health resources for the Car 40 program.

Next Steps

At the June 27, 2022, Safe and Secure Kamloops Working Group meeting, members recommended that City staff request that Interior Health provide a representative to participate, with the intent of improving coordination and collaboration between health services, protective and emergency services, and social services. Interior Health currently provides representation at the Safe and Secure Kamloops - Social Agencies Engagement Group but not at the working group level, which the engagement groups report up to. City staff will action this recommendation prior to the next meeting. The City will also send a formal request to the relevant provincial ministries for a joint meeting with Council as per the motion passed at the June 14, 2022, Regular Council Meeting.

Through the Social Plan update, the City will also conduct systems mapping and a gap analysis of social infrastructure assets in community with a focus on places and programs that provide health and/or social services to meet the needs of community members. This project will help the City, community partners, relevant government agencies, external funders, and other stakeholders use a more targeted and data-driven approach to address gaps in the city's social infrastructure and to apply evidence-based solutions to social issues affecting community.

RECOMMENDATION:

For Council information only.

SUPPORTING COUNCIL AND CORPORATE DIRECTION

- June 14, 2022, Regular Council Meeting - Council resolution to request a joint meeting with the Minister of Health, Minister of Mental Health and Addictions and the Attorney General and Minister Responsible for Housing



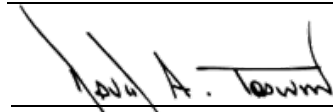
B. J. McCorkell
Community and Protective
Services Director

Author: C. Mazzotta, MA, Social, Housing, and
Community Development Manager

Reviewed by: B. Berger, Recreation, Social
Development, and Culture Manager

Our corporate mission is...

MAKING KAMLOOPS SHINE



Approved for Council
CM/kjm