

Homelessness Recommendations

May 23, 2023

Perfect Storm

City of Spruce Grove

Low Vacancy (less than 1%)

Lack of Affordable Housing Stock

COVID 19 Pandemic

Economic Conditions

Lack of Investment in Mental Health/Addictions

Significant and Rapid Growth

Previous Council Presentations

Approve WERC public budget submission (5 yrs. funding)

Renovate and open Community Hub at 410 King St.

Hire staff to operate Community Hub

Proceed with updating Social Sustainability Plan

Investigate alternative locations for a combined Community Hub and Late Night Café

Investigate and report on supportive housing facility

9 January 2023

22 August 2022

20 March 2023

Update on successes and challenges (responses to both)

No additional direction or decisions

Strategic Plan

GOAL 1: The City has an inclusive approach to community development that values community knowledge, diversity, and wisdom.

Objectives:

- Integrate a Diversity, Inclusion, Equity and Belonging (DIEB) lens into decision making, planning, and service delivery.
- Support community groups through advocacy, capacity building, and grant funding.
- Honour diversity within the community to create a sense of belonging.

GOAL 2: Barriers are reduced, access is improved, and participation increases for City facilities, programs, and services.

Objectives:

- Determine the best approach to delivering social programming and services.
- Reduce accessibility and affordability barriers to housing, programming, and transportation services.
- Facilitate access to supports for residents who are unsheltered, homeless or at risk for homelessness.

Strategic Plan

GOAL 6: Safe, livable, and sustainable neighbourhoods for all residents that contribute to a high quality of life.

Objectives:

- Continue supporting safe communities while ensuring the well-being of residents as a shared responsibility.

Statistics and Successes

- 120 unique users (59 still active)
- 70 per cent identify as male
- 80 per cent Spruce Grove residents
- Themes

Lack of affordable housing in the Tri-Region and larger region

Addictions

Mental health challenges

Lack of sustainable income

Statistics and Successes

- 10 individuals have been housed (either directly by City or through referrals).
- 3 individuals have been successful in being entered in addiction treatment programs.
- A total of 25 individuals have secured funding from various sources (AISH, CPP, Alberta Works, Seniors Benefits, etc.).
- We have supported 5 residents through legal/court matters.
- We have supported 2 residents through domestic violence.

Statistics and Successes

- Several individuals have been re-connected with family members.
- Medical care and other health care services have been provided. 10 mental health and 17 physical health referrals/supports have been accessed.
- There has been at least one resident successful in securing employment.
- 16 individuals have been able to secure personal identification for the first time in many years which also is a key factor in being able to access additional supports.
- We have assisted seven individuals with transportation support to another community (where they are from originally or have family supports).

Feedback

Issue	Detail
Concentration of unsheltered in one area with both Late Night Café and Community Hub in close proximity.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. On one hand it provides better opportunity to address issues, gather real time data, serve through readily available resources. 2. On the other hand it does increase visibility and presence of unsheltered in immediate area, raising concerns and questions.
Location of the Community Hub	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Significant concerns expressed over the location and its proximity to a residential area, schools, and community amenities (Agrega, Library). 2. Conversely, opinions have been shared about the importance of proximity to amenities such as the library. 3. Feedback from businesses in the area have ranged from significant concerns over increased numbers to offering supports and assistance.
Nimbyism	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Consistent feedback has been received from many in proximity to the Community Hub that they are understanding of unsheltered individuals receiving access to supports; however, have also expressed that these should be provided elsewhere in the community.
Safety and increased crime	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Concerns over increase in social disorder, especially visible. 2. Reports regarding increased thefts and perception that unsheltered individuals are responsible. 3. There has also been increased violence committed against the unsheltered in our community.
Importance of supporting unsheltered	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. While there have been a number of negative concerns expressed, administration and City Council have also received feedback on ensuring that we continue and enhance supports for the unsheltered in our community. 2. This has included community groups and organizations that are also serving unsheltered; however, it has included general community members themselves.

Analysis and Considerations

- Discussions with other municipalities and industry partners regarding their experiences (both positive and negative).
- Engagement with Late Night Café.
- Engagement with community partners, staff, and residents of the Community Hub.
- Analysis of the feedback and direct discussions with residents and business in and around the Community Hub and throughout the community.
- Exploration of a variety of options and locations.
- Details around zoning, Alberta Health regulations, fire/building code requirements, site servicing, budget, and program options have been examined for several options.

Analysis and Considerations

Co-locating Community Hub and Late Night Café

- Enhanced synergies in service delivery
- Challenges with both in one area (congregating)
- Perceptions and reality of increased crime, social disorder, public safety, etc.
- Co-locating would likely only transfer the concerns from one area to another
- No location would be immune to complaints

Analysis and Considerations

Space Requirements for both programs

- 7,000 sq ft of facility space and 0.40-0.50 acres
- Reception
- Day Program Space
- Mat (evening) Program Area
- “Community Kitchen” food prep space/storage
- Client Washrooms & Laundry
- Staff Washrooms
- Storage Space
- Some Parking and outdoor space

Analysis and Considerations

City Owned Sites

- Limited inventory
- No site had existing building
- Trailers would have to be utilized
- Wide range of opinions and experiences with trailers
- Additional fire/building code considerations.

Analysis and Considerations

Site	Planning Considerations	Servicing Considerations	Size
110 Manitoba Court (Transit Storage Site)	Zoning and/or LUB amendment required	Water/sewer at property line Power/gas services required Est. \$200k to bring services to back of site	0.40 acres
50 Diamond Ave. (Eco Centre)	Zoning and/or LUB amendment required Major pipeline corridor present (approval or permit required)	Water/sewer available Power/gas services available Moving existing Eco Centre est \$400k	1.15 acres
21 Century Close (Old PW site)	Zoned as "Government Services" so is a permitted use Pipeline corridor present (approval or permit required) Old landfill may create significant setback issues	No services to site Approximately \$400k for servicing	8.5 acres* *subject to setbacks

\$11,000 per month lease - \$132,000 annual

\$275,000 one time installation, dismantle, delivery and removal

\$407,000 for 12 months and \$539,000 for 24 months + \$200-\$400 k servicing

Total 12 month estimated cost (excluding operating) = \$607-\$807 k

Analysis and Considerations

Building/Land Purchase

Opportunities

1. If the building was used temporarily the City would have an asset that could be sold at a future date to recoup the original investment with the potential that the value could have increased over time.
2. The building and/or land could potentially be used for a permanent supportive housing building site (either build new or convert).

Risks

1. Significant upfront costs (estimated between \$1.25-\$2.5 million).
2. Initial costs do not include any required renovations.
3. Zoning and other LUB amendments will likely be required.
4. Servicing requirements are unknown and may need to be brought in.
5. Competitive market and time delays in finding the appropriate building in an appropriate location.

Recommendation #1

Maintain the Late Night café in its existing location until a permanent supportive housing facility is secured.

Recommendation #1

- Engagement with WERC
- Has been operational since November 2020
- Minimal concerns expressed prior to the opening of the Community Hub in close proximity
- Complaints were still received but dispersed
- Competency to operate with additional support
- No exact timing (24 months if rec. approved)

Recommendation #2

Transition the Community Hub from a permanent, physical location to a mobile outreach model of service

Question #1 - How does mobile outreach model work?

- Meeting people where they are
- Building meaningful relationships with individuals and providing requested supports
- Community relations
- Staff armed with laptops and various location options to assist (example ID)
- Proactive (driving/walking through community)
- Reactive (complaints)

The City of Grande Prairie's Mobile Outreach is a diversion program focused on mitigating the impacts of street-level social disorder, addiction, and public intoxication. The program assists businesses and residents in handling their concerns related to the street-engaged population. Concerns may include trespassing, loitering, disturbances, public intoxication, needle debris, and encampments.

Mobile Outreach is intended to provide immediate support for a client's basic needs and navigation through local service systems such as emergency shelters, health care, addiction treatment, and housing.

Services Mobile Outreach provides include:

- *Response to community*
- *Improved access to social services*
- *Transportation to a safe place*
- *Connection of clients to community resources (addictions and mental health services, housing resources, etc.) and supplies (water, snacks, information)*
- *Assistance with client appointments, regular check-in with clients, and positive relationships.*

Question #1 - How does mobile outreach model work?

Building Safer Communities Fund

- Has been utilized by other municipalities
- Grant application “highly favourable”
- \$298 k for ‘23/’24 & ‘24/’25 & \$170 k for ‘25/’26
- Not eligible for existing programs and services

Community Hub Closure

- End of June 2023
- Prior to grant approval - planning and community relations
- After approval - mobile outreach

Question #2 - Hasn't this already been happening?

- Yes and no
- Groups/organizations and individuals have stepped in to fill gaps
- Gaps and limitations still remain
- City has not been in this model of delivery
- Cannot transfer grant dollars (City is recipient and must be new service)
- Recruitment of staff with professional education and experience (outcomes and grant reporting)

Question #3 - How has this worked in other communities?

- Other jurisdictions have conveyed great success
- Time needed to build program and awareness
- Significant drop in calls to enforcement agencies
- Benefits to both individuals and community relations

Question #4 - What will happen in extreme weather?

- Late Night Café to remain for overnight accommodations when activated
- “warming” and “cooling” locations would be established (combination of partners and City facilities/services)
- Not concentrated in one specific area for an extended period of time
- Implementation and activation plan developed and communicated

Question #5 - Is this a degradation from what is happening today?

- From the perspective of a physical facility seven days a week 12 hrs per day - YES
- Community Hub intent was temporary to collect data and understand need in community
- From the perspective of implementing a robust mobile outreach program - NO
- Long term - both ideal

Question #6 - Is this mobile outreach program temporary?

- Research and analysis shows benefits on an ongoing basis
- Combination of outreach and supportive housing facility (physical location) most fulsome response
- Utilize the grant funding to determine benefits, learnings, opportunities
- Continuation would require investment and Corporate Plan approvals

Recommendation #3

Significantly increase the pursuit of a partner, location, and funding for a permanent supportive housing facility.

HOUSING CONTINUUM

- Jail - \$4,333
- Hospital - \$10,900
- Shelters - \$1,900+
- High utilization of medical services, police, mental health/addiction supports

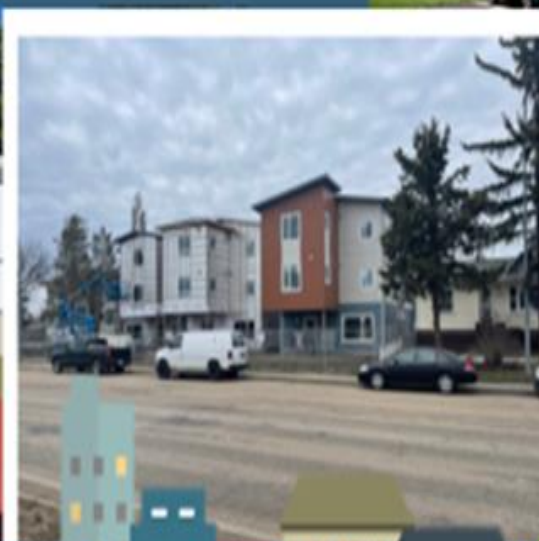
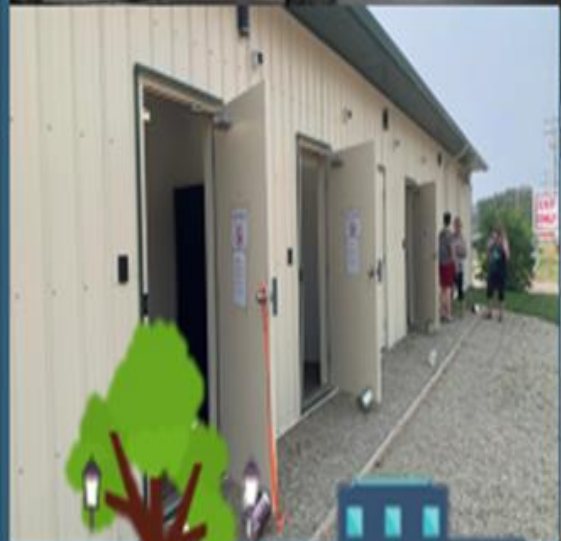
- 64% are less likely to require ambulance services
- 94% remained housed after one year
- Return on Investment (ROI) \$1 nets \$4 to \$5

- 50% less stays in hospital
- 82% less likely to have no income
- 84% reported improved well-being
- Police interaction down 46%





HOUSING CONTINUUM



Absolute
Homelessness



Emergency
Shelter



Transitional
Housing



Supportive
Housing



Social
Housing



Private Market
Rental



Home
Ownership

Recommendation #3

- Significant time and resources committed to exploring and then implementing a co-located facility
- Impact on timing and grant opportunities (24 months with approval - 36 months without)
- Focus energy and resources on grants, partners, and advocacy
- Ramp up pursuit and analysis of site locations
- RFP for operator/partner
- Major decisions/cost to come back to Council

Financial Projections

Co-located Community Hub and Late Night Café = **\$1,080,000 to \$1,280,000** (12 months)

(excludes previously approved \$27,750 annual funding for the Late Night Café)

Mobile Outreach Program = **\$177,000** (annually)

(\$475,000 operating budget less \$298,000 grant)

(excludes previously approved \$27,750 annual funding for the Late Night Café but does include additional budget for transportation, supplies, materials, communications, etc.)

Next Steps

1. Continue development of a communications plan and update website (May 24)
2. Signal to the community, partners, and facility users of the closure of the Community Hub by June 30, 2023. (May 24 start)
3. Immediately begin recruitment process for mobile outreach workers. (May 24 start recruitment with intention to start employment July 3)
4. Once staff have been secured, analysis, research, planning, and community relations work to begin as soon as possible. Outreach work will commence as soon as the grant has been approved. (Estimate for grant approval July 15-August 15)
5. Create and post “Request for Proposals” for a community partner to operate and facilitate a supportive housing facility. (Estimate for creation, posting, and evaluation of submissions 2 months)
6. Continue and accelerate analysis and recommendations for location options for a permanent supportive housing facility and report to Council for information or necessary approvals. (August 21, 2023 or sooner)
7. Prioritize grant analysis and applications for supportive housing funding. (Immediate – report/decision of Council TBD)

Questions/Comments