

NEWS RELEASE

Distributed December 30, 2021

City establishes daytime extreme cold weather space at Caledonia Park

Extreme weather day use space opened on December 26, 2021

Summary

On Monday, December 20, 2021, Council approved funding for the establishment and operation of a temporary daytime extreme cold weather space at Caledonia Park. The Nanaimo 7-10 Club Society agreed to operate the day-use shelter and began operations on December 27, 2021.

The cold-weather space will operate from 8 a.m. to 4 p.m., only on days when cold weather conditions are deemed severe enough to present a substantial threat to the life or health of vulnerable persons. The space has a capacity for up to 10 to 12 people.

In addition to the City-funded Caledonia extreme-weather space, the two other daytime warming centres have been established at 489 Wallace Street and 43 Commercial Street; operated by the Canadian Mental Health Association and Risebridge Midisland Culture Connection Society respectively, neither of which are funded by the City.

A winter overnight shelter opened on November 24, 2021 at St. Peter's Church to provide 24 additional overnight shelter spaces from 10 p.m. to 7 a.m. until March 31, 2022. The winter shelter is operated jointly by the Nanaimo Region John Howard Society and the Nanaimo Family Life Association. The year round Unitarian shelter (595 Townsite Road) and Salvation Army New Hope Centre (19 Nicol Street) also remain open for those requiring emergency shelter.

For more information on services and supports for Nanaimo's vulnerable population, visit www.nanaimo.ca/goto/supportsandservices.

Strategic Link: Support the work and implement the recommendations of the Health and Housing Task Force to address the health and housing crisis in our community. Providing an extreme weather day-use space for people experiencing homelessness is recommended in the Health and Housing Action Plan (HHAP), Nanaimo Action Plan to End Homelessness, and the Climate Change Resilience Strategy.

Key Points

- The cold weather day-use space will be open only on days when cold weather conditions are deemed severe enough to present a substantial threat to the life or health of vulnerable persons.
- Providing an extreme weather day-use space for people experiencing homelessness is recommended in the Health and Housing Action Plan (HHAP), Nanaimo Action Plan to End Homelessness, and the Climate Change Resilience Strategy
- The cold weather space will operate in the same park space as the free shower program, operated by the First Unitarian Fellowship of Nanaimo and funded by the City of Nanaimo.
- The space has been in operation from December 27 to 30, 2021 and is anticipated to continue operating during this current cold-weather period.

Quotes

"I would like to extend my gratitude to the 7-10 Club Society and City staff for working quickly to establish this warming space over the holidays. On behalf of Council we are pleased to be able to work with the 7-10 Club to provide a safe warm space for people living unsheltered to go to during the cold weather."

Leonard Krog
Mayor
City of Nanaimo

"Having a number of choices to shelter in extreme weather ensures more individuals the opportunity to utilize services in which they feel comfortable doing so"

Gordon Fuller
Executive Director
Nanaimo 7 10 Club Society

Quick Facts

- Last winter, two full-time warming centres opened at 285 Prideaux Street and 489 Wallace Street, funded from the Government of Canada's Reaching Home (RH) program's COVID allocation. In 2020, the City funded an extreme weather day-use space from January 12-19 at 285 Prideaux Street, which was co-managed by the Salvation Army and the 7-10 Club.
- The building at 285 Prideaux Street, which previously hosted the 7-10 Breakfast Club and the January 2020 warming centre, has been leased to BC Housing to redevelop as supportive housing. As such, this building is no longer available for use as a temporary emergency warming centre.
- The 2020 Point in Time Homeless count found 433 people facing homelessness in Nanaimo; local service providers estimate the number is closer to 600.
- The extreme cold weather space had 12 unique users on opening day (December 27) and 18 users each on the 28th and 29th.

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