



# Council Report

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**Date:** February 11, 2025 File No: 5080-01  
**To:** Anthony Haddad, City Manager  
**From:** Julie Czeck, Director of Public Safety and Partnerships and Partner Delegation: Tanya Behardien, Co-Chair, 100 More Homes, & Frank Conci, President, Penticton Industrial Development Association (PIDA)  
**Subject:** **Midterm Report: Temporary Winter Shelter**

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## Staff Recommendation

THAT Council receive into the record the report dated February 11, 2025 titled "Midterm Report Temporary Winter Shelter".

**Strategic priority objective:** *Safe & Resilient:* Enhance and protect the safety of all residents and visitors to Penticton.

## Background

On October 1, 2024, Council granted approval for a Temporary Use Permit at 402 Warren Avenue to operate a Temporary Winter Shelter from November 1, 2024, to March 31, 2025. The shelter is operated by Penticton and Area Overdose Prevention Society ("POPS") and funded by the province (BC Housing). Interior Health provides onsite medical and mental health services, and food services are provided by Ask Wellness Society.

While all operational aspects of the shelter are the responsibility of the operator, the City in partnership with 100 More Homes has been leading the implementation of a Safety and Security plan which includes responsibilities for the 24/7 oversight of the shelter operations, with the goal of the successful integration of this land use into the surrounding industrial neighborhood.

The Safety and Security Plan (the "Plan") is an integrated framework designed to ensure the safety and well-being of shelter stayers, staff and neighbors at/near the temporary winter shelter. The plan represents a collaborative commitment from all relevant organizations involved, including the RCMP, POPS, City of Penticton Bylaw and the Clean Team, Penticton Fire Department, 100 More Homes, BC Housing, Interior Health (IH), the Chamber of Commerce and the Penticton Industrial Development Association.

This Plan takes a coordinated approach to managing risks, ensuring compliance with regulations, and maintaining a secure and clean environment in and around the shelter. Key elements of the Safety Plan include:

- A Safety Supervisor at the shelter who manages safety-related issues, liaises with law enforcement and neighbors during the day, and private security providing overnight patrols for 24/7 coverage.
- Proactive patrols by City Bylaw, and RCMP for continuous visibility.
- Crime Prevention through Environmental Design (CPTED) and de-escalation training for businesses by the RCMP Community Policing Team.
- Weekly meetings with key partners (RCMP, Bylaw, Fire, 100 More Homes, business representatives, and Clean Team) to address emerging issues and trends. Meetings are co-chaired by 100MH and the City.
- Regular community forums (hosted by 100MH) that invite dialogue between residents, the operator and other partners involved in implementation of the Safety Plan.
- The shelter operator and City's Clean Team maintain neighborhood cleanliness initiatives through daily clean ups with the shelter operator and the City's Clean Team
- Interior Health provides complex care services, including overdose prevention, mental health support, wound care and primary health care.
- Regular data reporting on all components of the Plan, and the effectiveness of safety measures and community engagement.

The Plan aims to improve community safety, health outcomes, business relations, and cleanliness, ensuring the shelter integrates smoothly into the industrial neighborhood while addressing the complex needs of shelter stayers.

### **Analysis**

This report reviews data related to the Temporary Winter Shelter (TWS) program, covering the period from November 16 to December 31, 2024, as provided by all participating agencies. Due to the time required for January data analysis, this update includes data only up to December 31. A comprehensive report, encompassing the entire operational period from November 16, 2024, to March 31, 2025, will be available as part of a final report to Council at the end of the season.

Firm conclusions should not be drawn from this data due to the short reporting period. However, it still offers valuable insights into the progress of the new 24/7 shelter model, which has been implemented in collaboration with multiple agencies.

### ***Shelter Updates***

The TWS is approved to operate 40 beds, but demand exceeds capacity. Since opening, the shelter has had to turn people away on 132 occasions due to being full. Approximately 50% of the beds have turned over (ie. vacated by one person and filled by another) since opening, indicating that this population remains highly mobile even with a 24/7 model. However, those who have consistently stayed at the shelter (50%) have shown positive outcomes.

Under the TWS model, the province has funded case managers at the shelter. Case managers differ from standard shelter workers. A case manager focuses on coordinating services and creating long-term plans to help individuals access necessary support, while a shelter worker primarily provides immediate, on-site assistance like food, shelter, and basic necessities and oversight to shelter guests. This has resulted in deeper service connection for individuals wanting to pursue life skills, housing, or rehabilitative services. Since the

shelter has opened, 7 individuals have transitioned to permanent housing, either in market or supportive housing. For clarity, these transitions into housing are not due to additional net new supportive/non-market housing units, but rather because of new connections for unhoused people to housing services who may not have supported while sleeping rough outside.

Interior Health has also experienced a high demand for their services by TWS shelter guests, with 47 primary care physician contacts in December. Additionally, there were 15 mental health and substance use connections, 7 clients began opioid antagonist treatment (i.e. treatment for addiction to opioid drugs) and committed to further care, and 15 clients improved their wound care significantly, preventing hospitalizations that would have been necessary if they were sheltering on the street.

*"When there was no hope left, no options, no one. When all other doors closed.... One remained open, the Temporary Winter Shelter. Where staff put understanding, compassion, human welfare first. That's what makes this place actually work. Their true passion for their work and efforts towards real overall change to such a broken system is innovative and truly inspiring. In such a short stay with them, their dedication, support and knowledge had a tremendous positive lasting turn around for my life." - Shelter resident -*

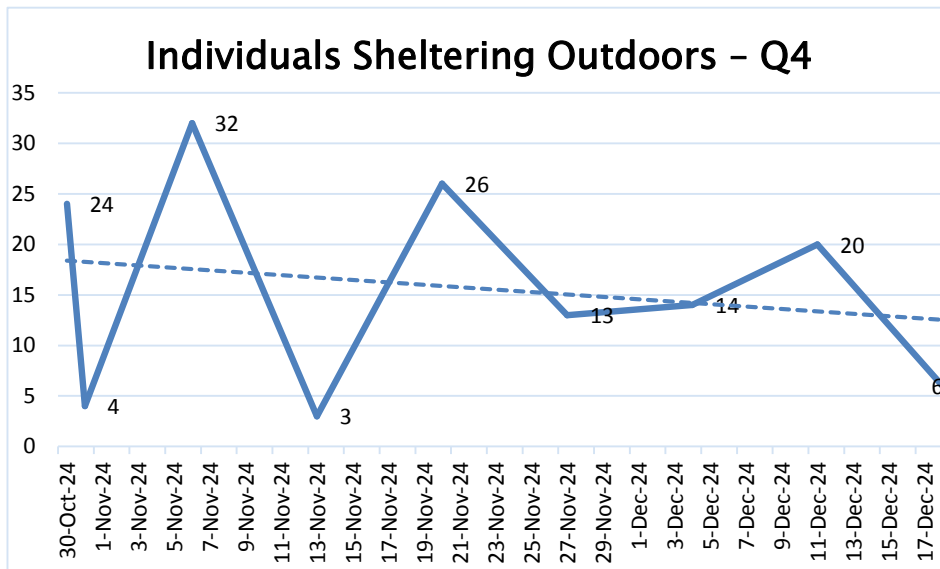
Since the Temporary Winter Shelter (TWS) opened on November 16, 2024, it has accommodated 65 unique individuals. Of these, 60% have reported living in Penticton for over 5 years, with most considering it their home community. Additionally, 18% of TWS residents reported coming from another province, 15% from other cities in BC, and the rest were either undisclosed or international. None reported coming from the Okanagan Correctional Facility.

Discussions about "home community" can be challenging because where people are born and where they feel a sense of belonging or identify as "home" can be different. The Charter of Rights and Freedoms also grants every Canadian resident the right to move freely within Canada and to leave and re-enter the country (or province/city) as they wish. Additionally, housing services for the unhoused are funded provincially, meaning "home community" is not a requirement to access service if someone finds themselves in a different city, similar to hospitals, where home community does not impact one's ability to obtain services.

Nevertheless, with approximately 40% of TWS residents having lived in Penticton for less than 5 years and coming from different BC communities and provinces, it underscores the need for more equitably distributed services to ensure people do not need to leave their home community to get help. This highlights the importance of regional and provincial collaboration to ensure equitable availability of services across all communities.

### ***Law Enforcement Updates***

**Bylaw Services Department:** In October 2024, the Bylaw Services Department began tracking individuals sheltering outdoors during weekly patrols. On average, 15 individuals were counted between mid-November to end of December 2024 within Penticton city limits. Although the Fairview encampment is outside the City's jurisdiction, approximately 15-20 structures have been noted there since November. Additionally, the Department conducted 522 proactive patrols and responded to 25 service calls in the Industrial area, including 4 at the Temporary Winter Shelter.



**Penticton Fire Department:** Since the opening of the Winter Shelter, there has only been 1 call for service at the TWS. However, in December 2024 the calls within the Industrial area totalled approximately 20 – 7 of which were fire related – and the remainder being a mix of overdose and medical in nature.

**RCMP:** Police calls for service in the industrial area decreased by 15% from November to December 2024 (from 173 to 148 calls) and by 3% compared to November 2023 (153 calls). The RCMP’s Integrated Crisis Response Team (ICRT) maintained a strong presence at the TWS, and members have dedicated 134 hours to proactive patrols near the shelter in December. The RCMP Community Policing Team also provided de-escalation training to interested businesses (promoted by PIDA and the Chamber) and Crime Prevention Through Environmental Design (CPTED) reports, completing 2 CPTEDs since November, with 2 more underway, in partnership with Bylaw Services.

**Community Collaboration & Engagement**

Maintaining cleanliness and a sense of pride in the TWS has been a key focus for shelter staff and peers to foster positive relationships with neighbors. To achieve this, they have conducted over 60 cleanup activities nearby. Additionally, the safety liaison and private security have performed 124 perimeter patrols, supplementing the proactive patrols by Bylaw and Police, and acting as the first point of contact for businesses with concerns or questions. This cleaning effort is further supplemented by the City’s Clean team, who spent a total of 13 hours of proactive cleaning hours in the industrial area in December.

*"We have had 0 issues, 0 complaints from neighbors. One of the guys weeds our gardens and brooms the sidewalks 10 hours per day. All good so far."*

–Neighbouring Business –

Additionally, 100MH's Lived/Living Experience Table (i.e. people with past or current experience of homelessness) has continued spearheading their community-wide cleanup efforts. In November, over 60 people, including those with lived and living experience of homelessness, participated in the cleanup, just

down the street from the TWS. Alongside weekly calls that bring together all partners for updates and triage, 100MH has hosted two neighbourhood forums. These forums are open for any neighbors and community members with an opportunity to ask questions of the shelter operator and other key agencies involved in the Safety Plan. Over 20 community members have attended in the past two sessions, and two more sessions are scheduled for February 19 and April 10<sup>th</sup> at the end of the winter session. The goal is to formalize learnings to enhance future models.

*"I am so happy with the information I have received from the meetings I have attended (100 More Home forums and City Council meetings) ... To my surprise, I was informed about the temporary winter shelter being opened roughly a block from my home on Nov 1, 2024. Automatic, instant panic set it.... The regular patrols done by RCMP and Bylaw – Bylaw especially, have not gone un-noticed. My neighbors and I see the continuous action taking place patrolling our street – a big thank you! ... I feel safe in my own home again."*

–Tia Carlesimo, resident near the TWS –

### ***Integration of the Business Community in the Model***

Overall, from all parties involved in the safety plan there is shared consensus that this model of shelter is bearing positive outcomes due to each organization involved "bringing their best to the table". This is not to say there are not challenges – but challenges are met with a quick response. The specific outcomes being observed include improved safety, quicker response times to challenges, improved connection to housing and health services, and a deeper understanding of the shelter model's impact through data analysis. These positive results are largely attributed to the collaborative efforts of all organizations involved.

New to this year's operations was weekly involvement from the Chamber of Commerce and Penticton Industrial Development Association representatives, who served as liaisons for businesses that may be impacted by the shelter operations near their businesses.

*"Implementing a 24/7 shelter model has been a game-changer for surrounding businesses. Whereas the Chamber used to receive frequent complaints from businesses surrounding last year's shelter that required guests to leave by 9am each morning, this year has resulted in neighbouring businesses expressing their gratitude in how small the impact has been and the efforts made to keep the neighbourhood clean. Being involved in regular communication was a key factor in identifying and resolving any issues that came up or had the potential to impact surrounding businesses. The involvement of multiple agencies and organizations provided the knowledge and means of addressing these concerns in the most effective, expedient, and empathetic manner possible."*

– Michael Magnusson, Executive Director, Chamber of Commerce –

*"The shelter program is helping people and caring for the surrounding community. Everyone involved is committed to making it work. Weekly meetings of all agencies provide for open communication and sharing. The monthly forums are open to all and have proven to be an important means of hearing about and dealing with issues in a timely and effective manner. The task of rehabilitation and restoration is huge and this shelter is a very positive step forward. I offer my gratitude and congratulations to everybody involved in planning, organizing and operating the shelter. Your expertise, hard work and professionalism is just outstanding."*

### **Next Steps**

The TWS model has shown promising preliminary results this season, providing essential support to the unhoused community while maintaining a safety plan for the surrounding neighborhood. With the shelter set to close on March 31, 2025, a transition plan is crucial and in progress and will be presented to Council in the coming meetings.

100MH will host two additional neighborhood forums on February 19th and April 10th, 2025. More details on how to sign up are available on the 100MH social media pages. Partners will continue to provide monthly reports to inform a comprehensive report back to the Council at the end of the season, expected in April once data analysis is complete.

### **Financial implication**

Lease costs equated to \$120k a year with \$112k included in the 2025 budget funding through surplus and an additional \$30k to be included in the 2026 budget (potentially increased should the lease be extended beyond April 2026); funding for 2026 will be determined through the annual budget processes.

On September 5, 2024 staff took a financial request to the RDOS Board to contribute to this program, intended to offset the City's portion of costs – during the first 6-month period. City staff requested 20% of the total lease costs from the RDOS (20% of the \$65k lease costs – November to end of April) which was approved by the Board. This corresponds to data trends from the last season which indicated that an estimated 20% of users of the emergency winter response shelter were from outside of Penticton.

### **Climate Impact**

It is well documented that vulnerable people face disproportionate challenges with climate change as it contributes to extreme weather events, health effects, food, water, housing displacement, loss of cultural identity, and other related risks. Supporting a socially healthy community is paramount as the social services sector are critical agents of change that can spur the social transformations necessary to adapt to, mitigate and build resilience to the effects of climate change.

### **Alternate recommendations**

N/A

Respectfully submitted,

Julie Czeck, Director of Public Safety and Partnerships

Concurrence

City Manager  
AH