

April 11, 2022

## **Confidential permanent shelter information released; next steps approved for public participation**

Additional permanent shelter information is being released publicly today following Council approval. The City enacted the FOIP Act throughout the process to protect government to government relations, advice from officials and the recommendations and advice that could be expected to result in financial loss. In the report being released today, items such as Council reports, presentations made by administration, and letters to and from the province are included.

### **1. Why was the information previously confidential?**

The City is dedicated to upholding the integrity of our decision making process through legislative requirements. Through Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act requirements, certain information, recommendations, advice, and decisions on matters impacting the community can be made in closed Council meetings (In Camera). If any of the items do not meet FOIP requirements, they must be made in a public meeting.

During the process of site locating and approvals, most of the conversations were held in closed meetings (In Camera), complying with the FOIP act:

- Protect government to government relationships although this is a project led by the province, there are components that The City is responsible for and involved in, ensuring the success of the process and final service.
- Advice from officials – conversations held throughout the process included specific advice from officials relating to site options and direct impact to the community. Holding these conversations in a closed meeting allowed for candid conversations that led to public decisions being made.
- Protect the recommendations and advice that could be expected to result in financial loss, prejudice the competitive advantage, or interfere with contractual or other negotiations. Through the site search process, most of the locations identified were not City-owned meaning that acquiring the site may have been required. To protect The City's ability to properly negotiate land purchase, the sites considered were not released, and will not be released to the public at this time.

### **2. Why are there still some redactions in the report?**

To be more transparent on the permanent shelter process, Council voted in favour of making all reports, communications and presentations from In Camera meetings throughout the project process public. However, as the final location of the permanent shelter has not been determined, there is certain information that has been redacted to protect the integrity of the In Camera process and economic interests if a non-City owned site is selected. The redactions throughout the report include site specific information, contractual obligations, legal advice and third-party business information.

### **3. Why does Red Deer need a permanent shelter?**

The purpose-built permanent integrated emergency shelter will be designed to respond to the long-term social needs of our vulnerable population. Council has advocated for a housing-focused shelter model where a move to permanent accommodations is prioritized, helping to ensure shelter stays are brief, rare, and non-reoccurring.

Over the past decade, temporary emergency shelter solutions have been implemented but these have not been designed spaces to support service delivery to those who are facing homelessness and addictions. People in the social service sector have worked tirelessly to support those in need, but they need support to advocate and implement long-term strategies that will be mutually beneficial.

**4. What does purpose-built mean?**

Purpose-built, in reference to the permanent shelter, refers to the design of the building and the spaces and amenities that are included. The design and build should meet the needs of those who will access the services offered, as well as supporting the surrounding neighbourhood and the community. The City and the province will work with the community to identify the necessary components of the build, ensuring its success as part of a continuum of social support services offered in Red Deer.

**5. What does integrated mean in relation to a permanent shelter?**

When we refer to the future permanent shelter as being “integrated”, it means that the facility will include a variety of services to help the immediate needs of our vulnerable population, including a primary focus on their journey to obtaining and retaining permanent housing. Services that support an individual’s immediate needs can include items like food, laundry, a safe place to sleep, and medical services. Other services that may be considered in the permanent shelter include services like addiction and mental health support, help in obtaining identification, support in obtaining income, among other services. Some services may be permanent fixtures in the shelter, while others may be temporary or satellite offices.

**6. What public participation has taken place so far?**

In February 2022, The City hosted seven targeted meetings with a third-party engagement specialist to develop an understanding about downtown property owners, businesses, associations, and service providers to provide feedback on process and a particular site, that was proposed. No site is proposed or being considered by Council at this time.

**7. Why is further public participation going to take place?**

The targeted meetings hosted in February 2022 resulted in administration understanding there is support for a permanent shelter in the community, that citizens want to be involved in the conversation moving forward, and that there is an information differential creating misinformation in the community about the project. The main themes that came out of those meetings are that there is a lack of trust and transparency when it comes to shelter services in the community. This led to the recommendation for further public participation to Council.

**8. How can I get involved in future conversations?**

Following further conversations with Council about public participation practices and level of influence The City and community can have on shelter related decisions, a public participation strategy will be finalized in the coming weeks, with an anticipated implementation date of late May. Once the strategy has been developed, The City will reach out to the community asking for citizen involvement.

**For more information, contact:**

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