



CS01762

Edmonton

## **Edmonton's Approach (2023/24) - Supporting Those Experiencing Homelessness**

Edmonton City Council  
May 16, 2023

# Winter 2022/23 Context



- Between **2,650 and 2,800** Edmontonians were experiencing homelessness
  - **1,250 - 1,350** self-identified as primarily sleeping in emergency shelters or outdoors
- Up to **1,427 overnight** emergency shelter spaces
  - Government of Alberta funded 1,202 spaces
  - Al Rashid Mosque provided up to 75 additional spaces (only during extreme weather activations)
  - West End Shelter provided up to 150 additional spaces
- **997 daytime** spaces
  - 280 day shelter spaces
  - 627 24/7 shelter spaces
  - 90 temporarily funded 24/7 shelter spaces

# Winter 2022/23 Activities

## Extreme Weather Activations

- ETS Extreme Weather Buses and Boyle Street Warming Bus
- 75 emergency shelter spaces at Al Rashid Mosque
- Encampment response teams support
- City facilities open for warming purposes

## Connecting People Experiencing Homelessness in ETS Facilities to Supports

- Winter response bus
- Well being checks of vulnerable Edmontonians in ETS facilities
- Support connections during ETS station nightly lock ups

## West End Shelter

- Shelter and transition housing spaces

## GoA Shelter Supports

- Permitting and logistical support

## Other Supports

- Day Shelter supports
- Shigella response

## Winter 2022/23 Findings

- Winter 2022/23 has seen **45 days** of extreme weather activations
- While the total number of beds has expanded to meet demands, there is some evidence the shelter system is still not meeting the needs of many individuals experiencing homelessness.
  - An average of **225** individuals were asked to leave ETS facilities during nightly lock-ups, with an average of **106** of those 225 individuals refusing transportation to shelter
  - Consistent presence of encampments through the winter
- Agency, ETS and TPO staff shortages was a significant operational concern.
  - Out of 117 requested shifts for outreach workers on the extreme weather buses, only 23 were filled
  - On 15 nights in December, three nights in January and six nights in February there were not enough TPO staff to fully staff the shelter shuttle using overtime resources.

# Winter 2022/23 Findings



The City is developing a strategic plan and mandate to clarify its corporate role in addressing homelessness. The new Plan to Prevent and End Homelessness (October 30, 2023) and the Corporate Homelessness Plan (Jan 2024) will provide this clarity. However, planning for supports through the summer and next winter needs to begin now.

## Expiration of Agreements

- West End Shelter (formerly Bedford Inn)
  - Unspent funds are forecast to support operations until September 30, 2023
- Day Shelter Services Spaces
  - Winter 2022/23 funding provided expanded day services programming and increased operational hours
  - **Boyle Street Community Services funding expires April 30, 2023**
  - **Bissell Centre funding expires May 31, 2023**
  - Both organizations have requested City funding, which is outlined as a potential option



## Winter 2023/2024 Base Level Activities

Base budget funding of **\$1.25 million** is available for winter 2023/24 activities:

1. Extreme and cold weather activations
  - Transportation during Extreme and Cold Weather activations
  - Winter Warming Bus
  - Al Rashid Mosque - CoE support for shelter spaces
  - Encampment response teams support
  - Open some city facilities for warming purposes
2. Support for GoA funded shelters
  - Logistical support and permitting assistance
3. Other supports
  - Ongoing shigella response



## Winter 2023/2024 Additional Options

- Supporting day service supports - **\$4.08 million**
  - Bissell Centre (June 1, 2023 - March 31, 2024)
  - Boyle Street Community Services (October 1, 2023 - April 30, 2024)
- Additional Shelter or Housing Spaces - **\$11 - \$13 million** per year
  - An additional 200 continuous stay shelter or bridge housing spaces
- Supplemental transportation services - **\$TBD**
  - Increased shuttle buses, additional transit Peace Officer staff to support operations and transit centre lock-ups for people experiencing homelessness in ETS facilities
  - Costs identified once evaluation and planning work complete



## Winter 2023/2024 Additional Options

If Council provides funding for day services at Bissell Centre and Boyle Street Service Society for \$4.08 million, funding could be provided from the Financial Stabilization Reserve.

Funding any additional options will be a challenge. Potential funding sources for additional options include:

- Community Safety Well-being funds held within Financial Strategies
  - Not recommended as community-informed recommendations will come forward for Fall SOBA
- New funding requests through the 2023 Fall Supplemental Operating Budget Adjustment process
  - Would be too late to implement options for the full winter 2023/24 season

## Next Steps

1. Council guidance on the potential further activities for the winter 2023/24 season.

# Questions