



CITY OF
CHILLIWACK

February 13, 2025

Jennifer Kinneman, CAO
Fraser Valley Regional District
1-45950 Cheam Avenue
Chilliwack, BC V2P 1N6

Via Email: Jkinneman@fvrd.ca

Dear Ms. Kinneman,

Re: City of Chilliwack UBCM Resolution Submission – Equitable Distribution of Shelter Beds

At its regular meeting of February 11, 2025, Chilliwack City Council endorsed a proposed Union of British Columbia Municipalities resolution submission, "Equitable Distribution of Emergency Shelter Beds," to be forwarded to the UFVRD for endorsement and further submission to the Local Government Management Association, by March 5, 2025.

Enclosed is a copy of the certified resolution, the backgrounder to accompany it, and the Council staff report for information.

If you require any additional information, please do not hesitate to contact me at 603-793-2969 or stanton@chilliwack.com

Sincerely,

Karen Stanton
Director, Public Safety and Social Development

CERTIFIED RESOLUTION OF COUNCIL:

I hereby certify that this is a true copy of a resolution passed by the Council of the City of Chilliwack at its regular meeting of February 11, 2025:

“Moved / Lum

Seconded / Shields

That Council endorse the proposed Union of British Columbia Municipalities resolution submission, "Equitable Distribution of Shelter Beds", as follows:

SHORT TITLE: EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF EMERGENCY SHELTER BEDS

LOCAL GOVERNEMENT NAME: CITY OF CHILLIWACK


WHEREAS the Province of British Columbia, through BC Housing, is responsible for ensuring that emergency shelter beds are available to meet the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness across all communities;

AND WHEREAS some communities have a disproportionately high number of emergency shelter beds per capita compared to other jurisdictions, causing unsustainable pressure on local resources and services in those communities;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities call on the Province of British Columbia and BC Housing to develop and implement a comprehensive, regionally equitable strategy for the distribution of emergency shelter beds, ensuring that all communities provide proportional and sustainable shelter capacity relative to their population and local service capacity.

Carried unanimously”

Dated at Chilliwack BC this
12th day of February, 2025.



Jacqueline Morgan, CMC
Corporate Officer

AGENDA ITEM NO: 7.14

MEETING DATE: February 11, 2025

STAFF REPORT – COVER SHEET

SUBJECT: UBCM Resolution Submission – Equitable Distribution of Shelter Beds DATE: February 4, 2025

DEPARTMENT: Public Safety and Social Development PREPARED BY: Karen Stanton

1. SUMMARY OF ISSUE:

The Lower Mainland Local Government Association (LMLGA) is seeking the submission of resolutions from local governments for consideration at this years Union of BC Municipalities' (UBCM) Conference. Resolutions must describe an issue relevant to other local governments across British Columbia, and clearly articulate the action requested of UBCM. Council are asked to consider the attached resolution and backgrounder, requesting that UBCM call on the Province to establish an equitable emergency shelter strategy across the Province. Should Council endorse the recommendation presented in this report, the resolution would be forwarded to the FVRD Board for endorsement, and subsequently to the LGMA before the March 5th deadline.

2. RECOMMENDATION:

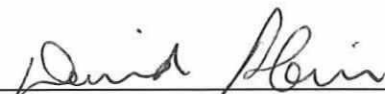
That Council endorse the proposed UBCM resolution submission, "Equitable Distribution of Shelter Beds," as contained within the staff report dated February 4, 2025, for endorsement by the Fraser Valley Regional District and submission to the Lower Mainland Local Government Association.



Karen Stanton, Director,
Public Safety and Social Development

3. CHIEF ADMINISTRATIVE OFFICER'S RECOMMENDATION/COMMENTS:

Supports recommendation.



David Blain, CAO

STAFF REPORT ON
(UBCM 2025 Resolution Submission– Equitable Distribution of Shelter Beds)

PREPARED BY: _____	Karen Stanton	DATE: _____	February 4, 2025
POSITION: _____	Director	DEPARTMENT: _____	Public Safety & Social Development

1. BACKGROUND

Shelter, housing, social assistance, and health services (including detox, treatment, rehabilitation, mental health), are all provincial responsibilities.

Over the last decade, the City, through the Chilliwack Homelessness Action Plan and the Chilliwack Community Safety Plan, has worked diligently with BC Housing and local service providers to support an increase in the number of shelter and supportive housing beds to meet local needs. However, we are seeing through Point-in-Time Counts, that the number of people experiencing homelessness in Chilliwack, and elsewhere, continues to increase.

Over the last year, through meetings with local health, shelter, and social service providers, concerns have been raised about people arriving from other communities to Chilliwack in search of shelter. This would not be occurring if adequate shelter space was provided in each community. In reviewing BC Housing’s online emergency shelter bed location database, it is evident that not all communities in BC are participating equally in the provision of emergency shelter beds (on a per capita basis) and that there are some communities that do not have any shelter beds at all.

In December, the BC Urban Mayors Caucus, comprised of 16 mayors of the largest municipalities in BC, penned a letter (attached to this report) to Premier Eby, outlining a series of actions the Province should take to tackle some of the biggest challenges that local governments face. This included working more diligently with municipalities to establish shelter unit minimums, and substance use and mental health treatment and supports, in every community in BC.

2. FACTORS:

- 2.1 Council is requested to consider support for the following resolution with respect to the equitable distribution of shelter beds

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AND WHEREAS some communities have a disproportionately high number of emergency shelter beds per capita compared to other jurisdictions, causing unsustainable pressure on local resources and services in those communities;

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Union of British Columbia Municipalities call on the Province of British Columbia and BC Housing to develop and implement a comprehensive, regionally equitable strategy for the distribution of emergency shelter beds, ensuring that all communities provide proportional and sustainable shelter capacity relative to their population and local service capacity.

- 2.2 The following text is proposed to be forwarded as background information, as required by UBCM:

Backgrounder – Equitable Distribution of Shelter Beds

The Government of British Columbia, through BC Housing, is responsible for the provision of shelter beds to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness in communities across the province.

2023 Homeless Point in Time (PiT) Counts illustrate a growing number of people experiencing homelessness in communities throughout British Columbia ([2023 Report on Homeless Counts in BC](#); [2023 Homeless Count for Greater Vancouver.pdf](#); [2023 12 11 Final 2023 PiT Report web.pdf](#); [Home Page - BcHousing Shelter](#))

The Province's current approach to shelter development allows each community to self-determine their role in supporting emergency shelter provision. This has resulted

in an inequitable distribution of emergency shelter beds and related supports across communities. Information compiled from BC Housing’s online shelter map, shows that within the Lower Mainland, there are only three communities providing 2 or more beds per 1,000 population, while another twelve are providing between 0 and 1.61 beds per 1,000 population.

Where no beds exist in a community, people experiencing homelessness in that community must leave that community for shelter elsewhere. However, providing people at-risk-of, or experiencing, homelessness with shelter in their home communities, where familiar surroundings and established supports (social, cultural, familial and medical) exist contributes to better physical and mental health outcomes for that individual.

Spreading emergency shelter beds and related services out equitably across all communities, rather than concentrating them in a few communities, is a better approach not only for individuals who require those services; it also ensures that any given community’s medical, social, emergency services, shelter, and public safety resources are not overburdened.

In December 2024, the BC Urban Mayors Caucus, comprised of 16 mayors of the largest municipalities in BC, penned a letter (attached) to the premier outlining a series of actions the Province should take to tackle some of the biggest challenges that local governments face. This includes working more diligently with municipalities to establish shelter unit minimums, and substance use and mental health treatment and supports, in every community in BC.

3. RECOMMENDATION & SUBSTANTIATION:

Recommendation:

That Council endorse the proposed UBCM resolution submission, “Equitable Distribution of Shelter Beds,” as contained within the staff report dated February 4, 2025, for endorsement by the Fraser Valley Regional District and submission to the Lower Mainland Local Government Association.

Substantiation:

Homelessness is present in most, if not all, communities across the Province. As the level of government responsible for the provision of emergency shelter beds, the Province of British Columbia must take a leadership role in ensuring that shelter beds are distributed equally across communities, in a manner that is proportional to their size and local service capacity, and so as not to overburden any one community’s resources and capabilities.

December 23, 2024

David Eby, KC
Premier of British Columbia
Premier@gov.bc.ca



Sent via email

Dear Premier Eby,

As 2024 draws to a close, the Mayors' Caucus is reflecting on the past year in politics; federally, provincially, and of course locally, while looking forward to the year ahead. We have two remaining years in the local government term, in which you have the opportunity to use the first two years of your term to work with local governments in new ways, and to transform British Columbia for the better.

We, like many others, have been awaiting with great anticipation the release of the ministerial mandate letters for your new cabinet. The challenges that British Columbia face are changing rapidly, and we expect you are using this time to consult, consider, and carefully craft your new mandate letters. You have created new ministries and adjusted many roles, and we are optimistic that you will find a way to use your mandate letters to articulate the need for action on key policies for each of your ministers.

To get you into the holiday spirit, we have created a Christmas 'wish list' of our own- filled with ideas and suggestions for your incoming mandate letters. As Mayors, we know that we have a unique perspective and are confident that you will find the suggestions below to be practical and informed, while articulating the acute need for change and the immense opportunity you have before you. We request that you direct:

- Your Minister of Health to engage directly with local governments to assess the needs for substance use treatment and supports in each community, to improve local-government involvement in the creation of local-specific mental health supports.
- Your Minister of Health to immediately expand access to detox beds, sobering beds, and stabilizing beds in communities across BC.
- Your Minister of Health to explore options for provincially-funded recovery communities, and investment in a comprehensive range of recovery programs.
- Your Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing, in collaboration with his colleagues, to establish shelter unit minimums for each community in BC.
- Your Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to establish minimum care and operational standards for sheltering and supportive housing facilities, including their impact on neighbourhoods and neighbours.

- Your Minister of Housing to reform BC Housing, including providing BC Housing a new mandate that directly addresses the need for BC Housing to work more urgently with municipalities, and establishes BC Housing as the agency responsible for sheltering and supportive housing.
- Your Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General and the Minister of State for Community Safety to create funding and support for local governments that are creating or implementing community safety and wellbeing plans.
- Your Minister of Public Safety and Solicitor General and the Minister of State for Community Safety to create a provincial urban downtown safety improvement plan.
- Your Attorney General to act on bail reform, and immediately increase funding for provincial court services, to increase the speed and efficiency in which violent and repeat offenders can be processed through the court system.
- Your Minister of Infrastructure to work with colleagues in the Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs, the Minister of State for Local Governments and Rural Communities, and yourself, to build a municipal infrastructure funding program.
- Your Ministers of Health, Social Development and Poverty Reduction, Housing and Municipal Affairs, and Solicitor General to work collaboratively to address poverty, encampments, community wellbeing, food security, the mental health and addictions crisis, and street disorder by establishing a cabinet roundtable, working group, or committee to address these challenges collectively.
- Your Minister of Health to expand the PACT/CLCR programs and advance civilian-led mental health response programs throughout BC.
- Your Minister of Finance to explore cannabis revenue sharing programs with local governments.

A perfect holiday gift for the BC Urban Mayors' Caucus – and British Columbians - would be to see mandate letters early in the new year that incorporate some – or all - of the above recommendations.

We hope that you will consider the above carefully, and wish you, your government, and your family a happy holiday season.

Yours Sincerely,




Mayor Marianne Alto and Ken Popove, Co-Chairs of the BC Urban Mayors' Caucus

2025 UBCM RESOLUTION SUBMISSION

SHORT TITLE: EQUITABLE DISTRIBUTION OF EMERGENCY SHELTER BEDS

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Backgrounder – Equitable Distribution of Shelter Beds

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