

BRIEFING NOTE HS27-20

For information or For Approval

Date: September 23, 2020

Purpose: Emergency Low-Barrier Shelter Update

Prepared by: Stacey Cyopeck, Manager, Housing Programs

Reviewed by: Catherine Matheson, CAO

Information:

Briefing Note HS27-20 provides an update on the emergency low-barrier shelter located at 590 Chippewa Street West.

Background:

- On March 17th, a State of Emergency was declared in Ontario in response to the emergence of COVID-19.
- In response to the State of Emergency, a temporary low-barrier shelter was established at the YMCA in North Bay. Nipissing Mental Health Housing and Support Services (NMHHSS) served as the shelter operator, given their responsiveness and ability to open and operate immediately.
- April 16th, the emergency low-barrier shelter moved from the YMCA to the Pete Palangio Arena in order to increase capacity and have dedicated isolation space.
- On August 10, 2020, the shelter moved to 590 Chippewa Street West, the site of the Transitional Housing Project as the Pete Palangio arena was no longer available.
- DNSSAB has been able to support the emergency low-barrier shelter through emergency COVID-19 funding provided through the Social Services Relief Fund (Provincial) and Reaching Home (Federal). To date, \$589,200 has been received from the provincial government and \$292,252 from the federal government.

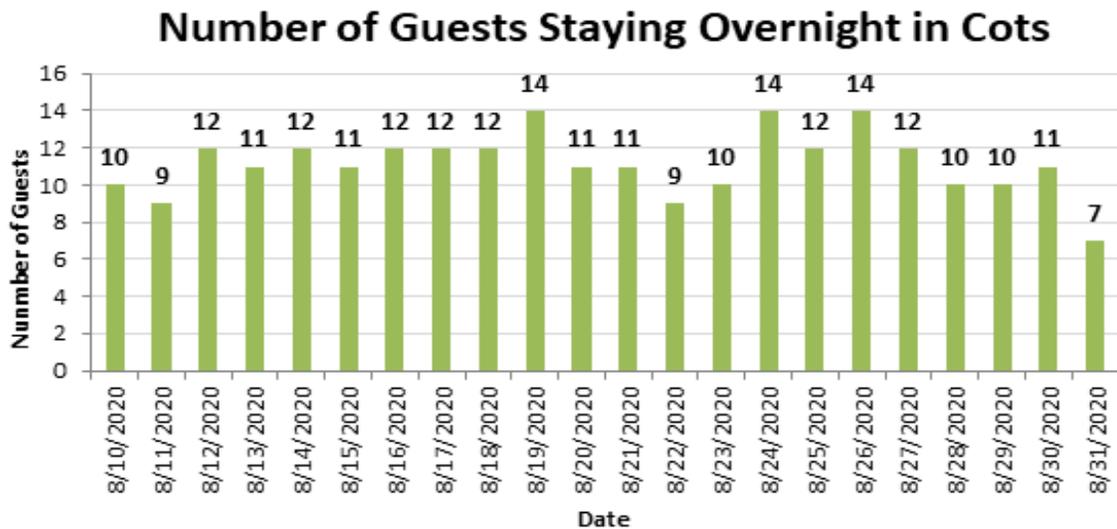
Report:

- NMHHSS, in addition to overseeing the operations of the shelter, provides mental health support services as well as rapid re-housing supports to shelter guests.
- Shelter guests have also benefited from ancillary services such as medical oversight from the Nurse Practitioner Led Clinic, AIDS Committee and psychosocial support from the North Bay Community Counselling Centre. St. Johns Anglican Church, the North Bay

Gathering Place and the North Bay Recovery Home have been instrumental in providing meals to the Centre.

- Nurse Practitioner-Led Clinic (NPLC) has provided recommendations on screening and isolation processes and appropriate usage of Personal Protective Equipment (PPE) for staff. Moreover, NPLC staff have provided physical assessments, consultations, and minor wound care to shelter users.
- North Bay Police Services have been instrumental in assisting to keep the shelter safe and welcoming.
- The City of North Bay authorized the continued use of the Pete Palangio Arena until August 10, 2020.
- On July 13, 2020, two portables were delivered to the new site, at 590 Chippewa Street West, and placed on pads on July 17, 2020
- An Occupancy Permit was received on August 10, 2020 and the shelter opened to guests operating for 12 hours per day, offering 12 beds.
- The shelter is currently being funded through cost-saving measures implemented by the DNSSAB. As of July 7th and up until December 31, 2020, the shelter is running at half capacity (12 cots) and for half the hours of service (12 hours).
- On Friday, August 14th, 2020, the DNSSAB was advised that it was eligible to receive an initial planning allocation of \$4.2M under the Social Services Relief Funding (SSRF) Phase 2.
- Contingent on the Ministry’s acceptance of a successful business case, some of the funding will be used towards the operation of the emergency shelter to March 31st, 2021.

Below is a chart identifying the number of guests staying overnight at the Chippewa site from August 10 to 31, 2020. You will note that occupancy at this shelter was at or over capacity for 10 of 22 days. Guests who are turned away due to capacity issues are referred to other agencies including safe beds, the Crisis Centre and Ojibway Women’s Lodge.



* Max capacity is 12. An overnight stay above 12 people indicates that a guest left or gave up their cot and another guest was able to fill that spot.

Risk Identified and Mitigation:

As noted above, the DNSSAB is eligible to receive funding through the SSRF Phase 2, contingent on the submitted Business Plan, which will provide much needed financial assistance for the emergency shelter and assist with individuals who are homeless or at risk for homelessness. However, the DNSSAB will continue to advocate to the provincial and federal governments for additional annualized funding.

Conclusion:

The low-barrier shelter has been truly impactful in mitigating the risk of the most marginalized and vulnerable citizens. It is clear that there is an on-going need for a low-barrier shelter for North Bay and the surrounding area to support this population. DNSSAB will continue to advocate to all levels of government for the continued operation of a low-barrier shelter.