

## BRIEFING NOTE HS02-22

For Information or  For Approval

**Date:** January 26, 2022

**Purpose:** **Gateway House Phase 1 and Low Barrier Shelter Update**

**Prepared by:** Stacey Cyopeck, Director, Housing Programs

**Reviewed by:** Catherine Matheson, CAO

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This report provides details on the current Emergency Shelter system, including an update on Gateway House Phase 1, and is for information purposes.

### **BACKGROUND:**

Homelessness continues to grow in complexity in the Nipissing District and has been exacerbated by the COVID-19 pandemic, which has further changed the landscape and conditions under which the Board was previously addressing homelessness and related issues.

As detailed in DNSSAB's Homelessness Action Plan, one of the priorities to alleviate the aforementioned homelessness issue is to create dynamic transitional and supportive housing that stabilizes individuals and promotes life skills development and independent living.

In November 2021, funded through the Investment in Affordable Housing 2014 Extension, Gateway House Phase 1 opened its doors. These 16 units provide stable, supported housing for individuals who are currently homeless or at risk of homelessness and living with complex barriers.

CHPI – Housing with Related Supports and SSRF is funding the operating costs of the Low-Barrier Shelter, while Gateway House Phase 1 is funded by the municipal levy. These projects are both essential components as they address an identified gap in the District's housing continuum. Although this gap was recognized pre-pandemic, it has further highlighted the need for a permanent solution. Both of these projects are crucial to meeting the needs of the most vulnerable population by further connecting them with services and rapid rehousing solutions on-site.

**CURRENT STATUS:**

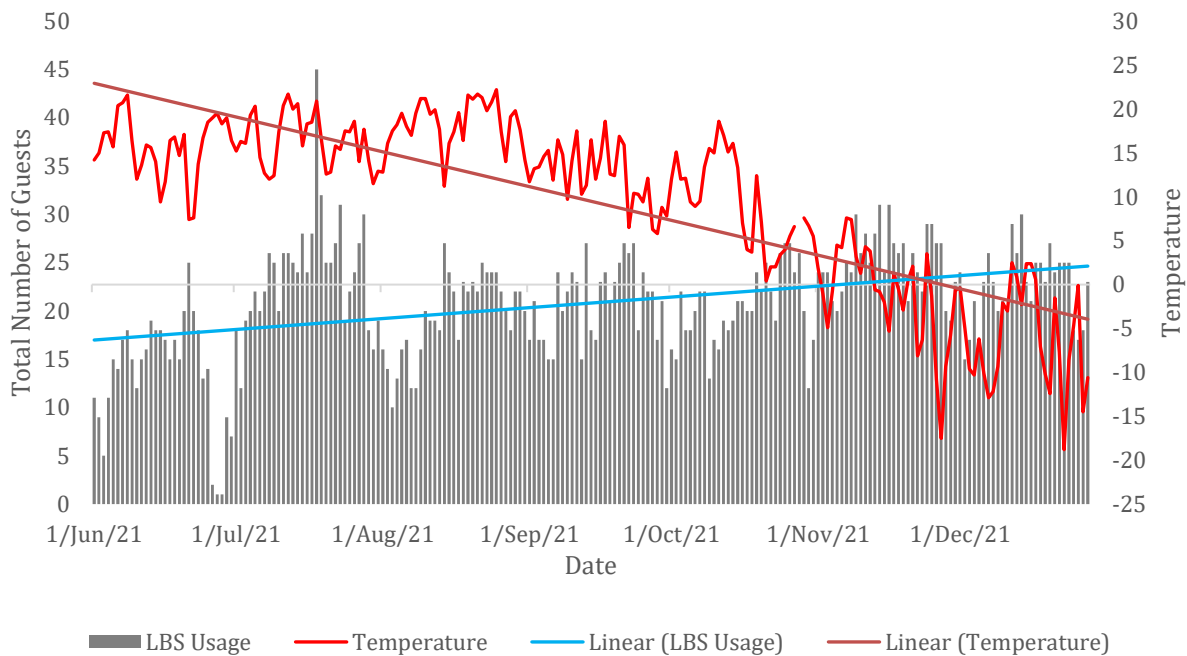
On November 26, 2021, the Emergency Operations Center was reinstated in response to a positive case of COVID, and potential high risk exposure in the homeless population. A local hotel was booked for 14 days for those needing to quarantine. As of November 29, 2021<sup>th</sup>, two units were occupied for isolation purposes, with six units available if needed. Services continued at the low barrier shelter and overflow for those not presenting with COVID symptoms or not deemed to be at high risk of having COVID.

As the colder months are upon us, the demand on the shelter system has increased. Consequently, Four Elms, the Low Barrier Shelter, and overflow (funded by CHPI) have been consistently at capacity. There has also been an increase in the number of individuals using the shelter for amenities only. It is expected that this demand will continue to grow into the winter months.

**Figure #1.0 Low Barrier Shelter: Guest Usage and Temperature**

**June 1, 2021 – December 28, 2021**

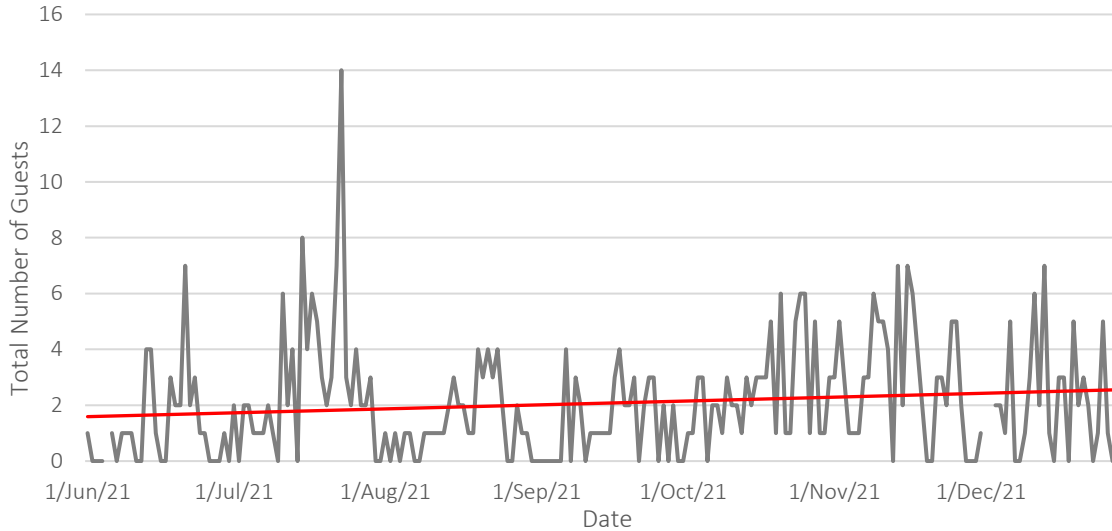
The Low Barrier Shelter capacity remains at 21 occupants and is consistently at capacity. The usage from June 1, 2021 to December 28<sup>th</sup>, 2021 has steadily increased as seen in Figure # 1.0.



### Figure # 2.0 Low Barrier Shelter: Guests Accessing Amenities Only

June 1, 2021 – December 28, 2021

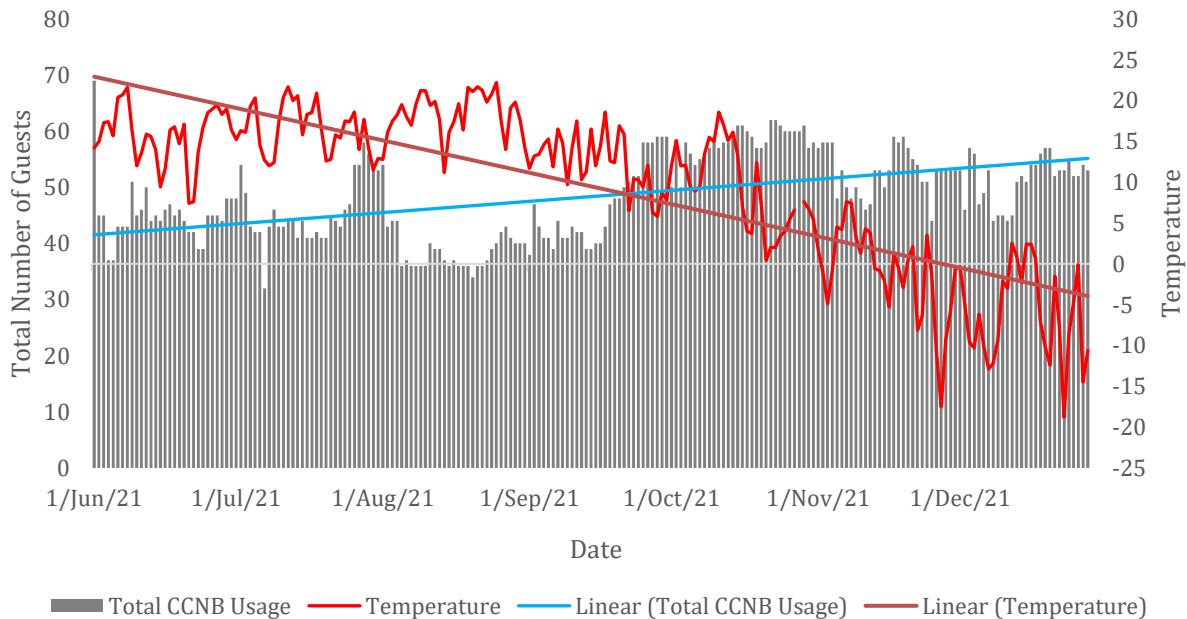
Figure # 2.0 depicts the same for guests visiting the LBS to use amenities available (i.e. showers). These trends are predicted as temperatures decrease even more.



### Figure #3.0 Crisis Centre North Bay: Four Elms & Overflow Combined Usage, and Temperature

June 1, 2021 – December 28, 2021

When analyzed in relation to temperature, it is evident (in Figure #3.0) that there is a negative relationship between the number of clients within CCNB and temperature. As temperature decreases, the number of clients seen at CCNB increases.



## Gateway Phase 1

As stated in DNSSAB's Homelessness Action Plan, independent and sustainable living can be a challenge for some segments of the population. Transitional housing is an avenue to stabilize individuals by providing necessary support services including life skills development. By nature, transitional housing is temporary and intended to move individuals further along the housing continuum. Supportive housing, conversely, is a more permanent rental accommodation where tenants are provided with ongoing supports to facilitate daily living needs. In North Bay, there is currently optimism due to relatively large development projects that are underway. These include the 16-bed supportive housing project known as Gateway House Phase 1. Residents have their rent supplemented by the Commercial Rent Supplement program.

Gateway House Phase 1 construction and renovations are complete. As of January 4<sup>th</sup>, 2021, there are eight residents living there, all of whom were described as chronically or episodically homeless. As a result of well-coordinated community partnerships, the transitions have been smooth and positive.

### RESOURCES REQUIRED:

- The DNSSAB requires increased funding to the Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative, increased capital funding to increase the housing supply in the district, as well as operating funds to sustain the local supply of shelter spaces, the existing supportive housing units and the additional 84 units anticipated to open over the next year.
- Successful implementation of Coordinated Access Nipissing requires dedicated resources linked to the shelter system, including navigation, assessment and ongoing supports for newly housed individuals.

### RISK IDENTIFICATION AND MITIGATION:

**Risk:** Access to services for individuals experiencing homelessness within the district continues to be challenging.

- The DNSSAB, in collaboration with other Community Partners, will continue to create opportunities for connections and referrals for supports, housing and treatment options.
- In the next few months, a Coordinated Access system will be implemented using the Homeless Individuals and Families Information System (HIFIS) and a Standardized Prioritized Assessment Tool, the Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (SP-DAT). This will allow for the creation of a shared, By-Name-List of homeless individuals waiting for support and housing and also provide accurate and timely data to use for planning

**Risk:** Access to shelter space for families experiencing homelessness within the district continues to be challenging. Consequently, the use of Overflow space has drastically increased in both frequency of use, and length of stay.

- Using the Social Services Relief Fund, the DNSSAB has secured two family housing units to be used as overflow shelter spaces which will reduce the costs associated with long-term Overflow use for families in need.

**CONCLUSION:**

In line with the Homelessness Action Plan, DNSSAB endeavors to provide a suite of coordinated homelessness prevention programs and services that will provide long-term stabilization and security to households and individuals at-risk of homelessness. The COVID-19 pandemic continues to challenge service providers and service recipients, however it has also provided opportunities for the DNSSAB and its partners to work together to face current and future challenges. The DNSSAB will continue to work with community partners and stakeholders to find creative and collaborative solutions to homelessness within the District of Nipissing.