

Report

Date January 18, 2023
Subject Licence of Occupation – A Place to Be

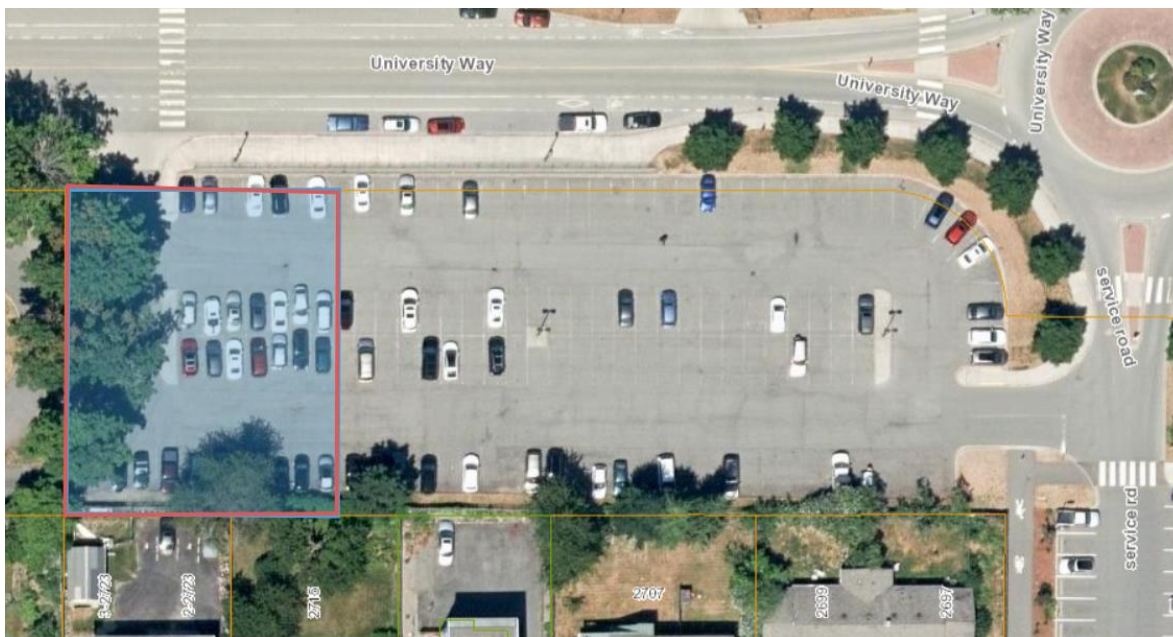
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PURPOSE

To consider approving a Licence of Occupation with Cowichan Housing Association for a portion of 2687 James Street (West end of Cowichan Community Centre parking lot adjacent to University Way) for use as a temporary daytime warming and cooling shelter for people experiencing homelessness.

BACKGROUND

The proposed Licence of Occupation would allow Cowichan Housing Association, along with an operator yet to be selected, to install a large tent structure in the Cowichan Community Centre Parking lot along University Way (East of the Agricultural Building and South of Vancouver Island University) for the purpose of providing washrooms, shade and cooling in the summer, and heat in the colder months, between 8:30 am and 4:30 pm, seven days per week for people who are experiencing homelessness.



The “A place to be” project, spearheaded and led by Cowichan Housing Association and funded through a \$624,050 grant provided by the University of BC Municipalities to North Cowichan, is intended as a pilot to provide semi-permanent daytime basic warming and cooling spaces shelter(s), which can be moved if required, for people experiencing homelessness. Cowichan Women Against Violence Society currently support one location for women, and this location, which will serve both men and women, does not yet have an operator identified.

These location(s) serve as a place for people to get out of the elements, use the washroom, and connect with health and social services outreach teams. This will enhance vulnerable community members' safety and positively impact businesses and residents by reducing congregation issues, as people experiencing homelessness will have a place to go during the day.

DISCUSSION

This land is jointly owned by the City of Duncan and North Cowichan and is a parking lot used and managed by the Cowichan Valley Regional District through a Licence of Occupation. The term of the current Licence of Occupation for the Cowichan Valley Regional District has expired; however, the Licence of Occupation renewal will be considered once the "A Place to Be" decision has been made by both Duncan and North Cowichan Councils.

Public notice of property disposition was provided in the Cowichan Valley Citizen on January 5 & January 11, 2023, in accordance with Sections 24, 26 and 94 of the *Community Charter*. A copy of the notice is included as Attachment 1 and the submissions received in response to that notice from a resident requesting that Council consider changing the location (Attachment 4) and the Cowichan Valley School District Board Chair (Attachment 5) expressing their concern with the location as it relates to the of their students, staff, and families.

The proposed Licence of Occupation includes several conditions of use (e.g. security, fencing, porta-potties, etc.) to help mitigate concerns from neighbouring residents and businesses, particularly the Cowichan Community Centre. The proposed Licence of Occupation agreement is included as Attachment 2.

OPTIONS

1. **(Recommended Option)** THAT Council approve the Licence of Occupation to Cowichan Housing Association for a portion of 2687 James Street (West end of Cowichan Community Centre parking lot adjacent to University Way), jointly owned by Duncan and North Cowichan, for "A place to Be" project, a semi-permanent daytime shelter to provide basic warming and cooling spaces for people experiencing homelessness, for a term of six months, with the option to extend the term for an additional six months.
2. THAT Council not approve a Licence of Occupation for the "A Place to be" daytime shelter project at the 2687 James Street parking lot location.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Council approve the Licence of Occupation to Cowichan Housing Association for a portion of 2687 James Street (West end of Cowichan Community Centre parking lot adjacent to University Way), jointly owned by Duncan and North Cowichan, for "A place to be" project, a semi-permanent daytime shelter to provide basic warming and cooling spaces for people experiencing homelessness, for a term of six months, with the option to extend the term for an additional six months.

Approved to be forwarded to Council:



Ted Swabey
Chief Administrative Officer

Attachments:

- (1) Cowichan Valley Citizen Newspaper Advertisement
- (2) Proposed Licence of Occupation Agreement
- (3) City of Duncan Staff Report
- (4) Public Submission
- (5) Letter from the Cowichan Valley School District