

# Municipal Update: Helping address homelessness in the Halifax region

Date of issue: July 22, 2022

*The Halifax Regional Municipality's priority has been, and continues to be, treating those experiencing homelessness with dignity – and continuing to work with community partners to find ways to provide support to them within our organization's capacity and scope. The following is an update on ongoing efforts to help address homelessness in our region.*

## **Designated Outdoor Sheltering Locations**

As of 12:00 p.m., July 20, 2022, the four designated outdoor sheltering locations were occupied as follows:

1. **Barrington Street Green Space, Halifax** – ten tents on site; capacity for ten more tents
2. **Lower Flinn Park, Halifax** – one tent on site; capacity for three more tents
3. **Green Road Park, Dartmouth** – no tents on site; capacity for eight tents
4. **Geary Street Green Space, Dartmouth** – one tent and three structures on site; the location is fully occupied

## **Signage & Site Rules**

- Work started on July 22 to install signage at each of the four locations, including site layouts and the rules and regulations that apply to everyone, such as [By-Law P-600 – Respecting Municipal Parks](#), [By-Law N-200 – Respecting Noise](#), and [By-Law O-109 – Respecting Open Air Burning](#).

## **Water**

- Water delivery has been organized for each of the four locations, with the first delivery completed on July 21. Water bottles will be delivered to each site on a weekly basis, with adjustments to frequency as necessary.
- The municipality continues to work with other partners to explore more sustainable options for providing water access.

## **Storage Boxes**

- Storage boxes have been installed at all four locations as of July 15.
- Two storage boxes currently at Meagher Park will be cleaned and relocated to the Barrington Street Green Space once reconstruction efforts begin at Meagher Park.

## **Portable Toilets, Garbage Cans & Garbage Collection**

- All four designated locations have been equipped with portable toilets and garbage cans, and garbage collection is in place.

## **Meagher Park**

- Further to the [municipal statement on July 5, 2022](#), and the [municipal update on July 15, 2022](#), the municipality had set July 17 as the date for those who had been sheltering in Meagher Park to transition to a designated outdoor sheltering location – if offers by the province or service providers for temporary housing were either not available or would not / could not be accepted.
- The health and safety conditions in the park continue to place those sheltering in this location in an increasingly vulnerable situation. The designated outdoor sheltering locations provide a safer alternative with access to additional supports and services.
- Everyone who was in the park when it was closed on July 5, 2022 has been offered alternative accommodations by the province or their service providers. Those unable or unwilling to accept those options have been provided information about the designated outdoor sheltering locations.

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- As of 2:00 p.m., July 21, 2022, there are approximately five individuals sheltering in Meagher Park. The majority of these individuals arrived after the July 5 announcement of the park closure. Note that it is difficult to confirm the number of individuals in a certain location given the transitory situation for many who are experiencing homelessness.
- Further to efforts leading up to, and throughout, the transition period which ended on July 17, the municipality has continued its civilian-led engagement approach. Municipal staff have visited the park every day since July 17 to perform wellness checks with those who remain onsite, connect them with service providers, inform them of the closure of the park and explain the services that are available at each of the four designated outdoor sheltering locations.
- The municipality is aware of various groups who have been protesting at Meagher Park since July 17 and have been in contact with representatives from some of these groups to ensure service providers have unimpeded access to the park to support those experiencing homelessness.
- Based on discussions with those sheltering in the park, it was expected that the park would be vacated by July 20 so that reconstruction efforts could begin. On the morning of July 20, a contractor hired by the municipality arrived at Meagher Park with the understanding that fencing could be installed. Upon arrival they were confronted by protestors. The contractor then spoke with municipal staff and confirmed that since there were still people in the park, both those experiencing homelessness and protestors, the fence would not be installed. The contractor then left the area. Once the park has been vacated, the municipality will engage the contractor to return to install the fencing.
- Efforts have remained focused on assisting those who are experiencing homelessness, with municipal staff encouraging those who remain in the park to accept alternative options and vacate the site.
- However, if someone refuses to leave the park, for whatever reason, and a negotiated settlement is not successful, a response plan will be developed by municipal staff which may include requesting the assistance of Halifax Regional Police, as a last resort. Failure to comply with the closure of the park is an offence under the Municipal Parks Bylaw and the *Protection of Property Act, R.S.N.S., 1989*.
- As previously stated, once vacated, the municipality will be fencing Meagher Park so that reconstruction work can be completed – returning the park to its original state. Over the coming months, planned work includes assessing the condition of the park, cleaning the area and resodding the grass.

**For more information about ongoing efforts by the municipality to help address homelessness in our region visit [halifax.ca/addressinghomelessness](https://halifax.ca/addressinghomelessness).**