

## TRI-CITIES BRIDGE SHELTER PROPOSAL

### **Overview**

The Tri-Cities Bridge Shelter proposal is intended to provide temporary overnight accommodation to persons homeless in the Tri-Cities over the inclement weather months of October – March inclusive. Operation is proposed to begin in the fall of 2012 and continue during fall and winter months until the permanent emergency shelter and transitional housing facility at 3030 Gordon Ave. in Coquitlam is ready for occupancy, scheduled for late spring 2014. The Bridge Shelter will be similar in format to the Tri-Cities Cold Wet Weather (CWW) Mat Program, but will operate from a fixed location – Grace Church, 2606 Kingsway Ave., Port Coquitlam – which is located within walking distance of the largest concentration of homeless persons in the Tri-Cities. The Bridge Shelter will eliminate the need to bus shelter patrons to a shelter site.

The Tri-Cities Bridge Shelter will have several advantages over the CWW Mat Program:

- ◆ Bussing of clients to the Tri-Cities Bridge Shelter will not be required;
- ◆ There will be expanded accommodation for possessions;
- ◆ The Bridge Shelter will be open for an additional month (October) of each year, increasing the contact between homeless persons and outreach resources which in turn will increase the number of persons who transition off the street;
- ◆ Bridge Shelter patrons will have access to the resources of the Homeless Resource Centre which is co-located at Grace Church.

The Tri-Cities Bridge Shelter will be operated by the Hope for Freedom Society with the support of the Tri-Cities Homelessness Task Group and local churches.

### **Need**

There are currently no permanent emergency shelter facilities in the Tri-Cities. The Bridge Shelter is proposed to bridge the gap between the end of the Tri-Cities CWW Mat Program on March 31<sup>st</sup>, 2012 and the opening of the permanent emergency shelter.

### **Period of Operation**

The Bridge Shelter will operate 7 nights per week from 1 October 2012 – 31 March 2013 and from 1 October 2013 – 31 March 2014. The permanent emergency shelter is expected to open at 3030 Gordon Avenue in Coquitlam in late spring 2014.

### **Hours of Operation**

9:30 PM – 7:00 AM

### **Capacity**

The Tri-Cities Bridge Shelter will have a capacity of 30 homeless adult men and women, 19 years and older. Shelter patrons will sleep on mats with blankets provided.

### **Location**

The Bridge Shelter is proposed to be housed at Grace Church, 2606 Kingsway Ave., Port Coquitlam.

## **Barriers to Entry**

No person demonstrating obvious intoxication will be admitted to site, and no alcohol, drugs or aggressive behaviour (verbal or physical) will be permitted on site. The policies & procedures which have been effective in managing client behaviour at the CWW Mat Program sites will be in effect for the Bridge Shelter.

## **Food Service**

Shelter clients will be offered a hot supper at 10 PM, a hot breakfast in the morning and a simple bag lunch to take with them.

## **Staffing**

Two qualified shelter workers who will be responsible for shelter security and management will be on site at all times during hours of operation. Qualification includes training in life skills, anger management, conflict resolution and first aid, and experience working with homeless persons. Shelter workers will be assisted by a team of volunteers for shelter set-up, cleaning and food service.

## **Managing Neighbourhood Impact**

### **1. Line-ups**

Line-ups at the shelter entrance prior to opening will be discouraged with the following measures:

- i) A reservation system will be implemented which will guarantee a space for returning clients.
- ii) The shelter will officially open at 10 PM with meal service, however clients will be admitted starting at 9:30 PM. This will create a 1/2 hour window for entering the shelter, rather than having a specific fixed time at which shelter clients must present themselves.
- iii) A sign will be posted at the entrance to the shelter which will specify the time period during which clients will be admitted, and request prospective clients not to loiter in the area awaiting shelter opening. Experience to date with the CWW Mat Program has indicated that shelter clients are typically compliant with shelter rules as they do not want to jeopardize the program.

Once a person enters the shelter, they will be required to spend the night.

### **2. Turn-Aways**

Persons who demonstrate intoxication with alcohol or drugs, exhibit aggressive behaviour or have been previously banned will be denied access to the shelter and requested to leave and not loiter in the area. If they fail to leave the church site, or if the shelter workers have any concern about their intentions, the RCMP will be notified.

### 3. Barring of Clients

Shelter clients will be banned from the shelter for a fixed time for the following reasons:

- ◆ use of drugs or consumption of alcohol, or possession of either, at the shelter;
- ◆ abusive or violent behaviour or intimidation with the threat of personal injury or damage to the building;
- ◆ unwillingness to follow staff or volunteer instructions.

### 4. Litter

Shelter volunteers will patrol a two block radius from Grace Church on a weekly basis and remove any litter found there, regardless of the source.

### 5. Complaints

A 24 hour/7 day per week complaint line will be available to neighbours who have a concern about shelter operation. The phone number will be posted on the Hope For Freedom Society website [www.hopeforfreedom.org](http://www.hopeforfreedom.org)