



*For immediate release – South Okanagan*

## **Emergency Winter Shelter to provide much needed support to Penticton's homeless community this winter**

**October 26, 2020** – The City of Penticton granted a temporary use permit this week for the Emergency Winter Shelter at Victory Church, Winnipeg St to be run by Penticton and District Society for Community Living (PDSCL). The shelter this year will operate 24 hours a day, 7 days a week to ensure people with no shelter or access to basic amenities have somewhere to be warm and gain support for multiple challenges they may be facing. PDSCL has more than 6 decades of experience supporting community members with complex housing needs and provides housing support to over 350 people in units across the city in partnership with BC Housing.

*"100 More Homes Penticton are pleased with the City's response,"* says Naomi Woodland, United Way Community Impact and Poverty Reduction Manager. Speaking on behalf of the *100 More Homes Penticton steering committee*, Woodland continues, *"They are an important partner in helping to address homelessness in the community and we appreciate their compassionate response to our most vulnerable."*

There are an estimated 120-150 homeless people in Penticton at any one time, this includes people in temporary shelters, living outside and staying on people's couches and floors. Of these more than 65% have been in Penticton for 5 years or more with the primary reason for not finding suitable housing being complex mental health and substance use problems.

The shelter was asked to provide some additional support mechanisms in light of concerns raised by the public and with some strong community engagement and listening to these concerns, the Temporary Use Permit was voted in favour by City Council. The additional support comes from community partners of the *100 More Homes Penticton Steering Committee* along with financial support from BC Housing.

*100 More Homes Penticton* works diligently to ensure support is available to the homeless community and is working hard to create a homelessness strategy with wider Municipal, Provincial and Federal partners. This group has the support of the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness and is one of two communities in BC working on the Built for Zero program which aims to have zero chronic homelessness in communities across North America.

*"As service providers, we have been working as hard as we can during a very challenging time to create spaces for people to be safe,"* says Tanya Behardien (Chair, *100 More Homes Penticton*). *"Around the 100 More Homes table, we are committed to collaboration with all partners and responding to the needs in our community. While relieved to hear about the temporary permit being granted, we have work to do towards long lasting solutions."*

The *100 More Homes* vision is to work collaboratively to build a system of housing and supports to prevent and address homelessness in Penticton.



**About *100 More Homes Penticton*:**

*100 Homes Penticton* is a committee of over 25 community leaders who have been working together since 2016 to provide housing and supports to vulnerable people in Penticton. The initiative is part of a larger, national campaign called Built for Zero Canada (previously *20,000 Homes*) which is headed by the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness. This campaign is based on the *Housing First* approach which is a preventative and recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness that centers on moving people experiencing homelessness into housing and then providing additional supports and services as needed.

Through the collaborative approach that 100 More Homes uses over 250 people have been successfully housed long-term in Penticton and over 150 additional housing units have been built to support the homeless population. For more information go to <https://unitedwaysibc.com/how-we-help/poverty/100-homes/>

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