

November 20, 2023

His Worship and City Councillors
222 3rd Ave. N.
Saskatoon, SK S7K 0J5

Dear His Worship and City Councillors,

Re: Emergency Residential Shelter Proposal at 1701 Idylwyld Drive North

On behalf of the NSBA – Saskatoon's Business Association, I am writing to notify you of feedback regarding the proposal for a temporary Emergency Residential Shelter at 1701 Idylwyld Drive North. Firstly, we commend the City and the Province for taking a significant step to address homelessness and provide support to individuals in need. As winter approaches, this initiative is important in assisting those facing complex needs without adequate shelter.

While we appreciate the positive intentions behind this proposal, it is important to bring to your attention the concerns raised by businesses in the vicinity. The majority expressed their main concerns as being two-fold: 1) a lack of effective communication and 2) safety concerns in the area.

Because of the lack of effective communication, we are fielding calls from our members and other members of the public, who have concerns about this being another Lighthouse or Emergency Wellness Centre, and the challenges that come with it. After conducting our own research, we recognize that this Complex Needs Shelter is not the same as these. (Even the naming of it in this Council Package leads to confusion over its purpose.) Therefore, we think a lot of confusion and anxiousness over the location could have been remedied with more effective and consultative communication. While we acknowledge that notifications were sent out to properties within a 300-metre radius, many individuals expressed concerns about the timeline in which they received their notice – of those that had received their notice – limiting their ability to provide adequate input.

Regarding safety concerns, many establishments in the area have encountered numerous break-ins and damages to their property over the years, increasing their worries about the impact of the proposed shelter. The break-ins and damages have resulted in a significant financial burden. It is yet another burden for small businesses to carry based on policy decisions by one government or another. We view this as problematic, and unfortunately it is a pattern that seems to be growing.

The proximity of the proposed temporary shelter to a busy road, Idylwyld Drive and 38th Street, is another huge concern to take into consideration. The high traffic risk on this road poses potential safety concerns for individuals accessing the facility and could worsen the current difficulties after being discharged 24 hours after if not provided adequate transportation services.

As the City continues to collaborate with the Province on this initiative, we strongly encourage the City to demand appropriate support from the Province. These may include policing, medical support, social services and other necessary resources, ensuring the safety and effective management of the temporary

Complex Needs Shelter is met as it is crucial for both the individuals it aims to serve and the businesses in the surrounding area.

On a positive note, the NSBA appreciates the information available on the City's website regarding the shelter space, including a list of common questions and answers. However, we encourage the City to communicate this information more effectively, as many businesses in the area remain unaware of the information and resources available.

In conclusion, we want to reiterate our support for the initiative to address homelessness in our community. As this is such a hot-button issue, it's imperative that there is clarity on the roles and responsibilities of both the City and the Province, and who is accountable for what. This partnership requires effective communication – both internally and externally – resulting in a message that is clearly understood by all stakeholders in the community.

Sincerely,



Keith Moen
Executive Director