

**From:** [Lu Yu](#)  
**To:** [External-Dev Feedback](#); [External-Clerks](#)  
**Subject:** [EXTERNAL] Comments for Emergency Shelter Temporary Use Permit at former "Army and Navy"  
**Date:** Monday, November 15, 2021 4:23:13 PM

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Dear City of New West Council,

I would like to share some feedback on the proposal for operating an emergency shelter located at 502 Columbia Street (the former Army and Navy department store).

I read that the emergency shelter might operate as:

1. An Extreme Weather Response Program shelter, which would operate from November 1 to March 31 and be activated during extreme weather events, and/or
2. An Emergency Response Centre shelter, which would operate 24/7 for up to 18 months or until new supportive housing is in place.

For context, I lived on Columbia street since 2014. I think an extreme weather response program shelter is important for preventing tragedies. If 502 is the only suitable location then using it as a temporary shelter during the cold winter months instead of leaving it vacant while people are freezing on the streets makes a lot of sense.

However, when I read the second proposed use of **a center that operates 24/7 for up to 18 months or until new supportive housing is in place**, I felt a bit uneasy. I also read in a local new article that the shelter might operate for up to 3 years?

Emotionally I am feeling concerned about the possibility of having another shelter in the neighborhood in addition to the various shelters we have in the downtown new west area. Does this mean the new shelter might not actually be temporary once it's set up and the demographic of the current downtown new west community could change even more in the next few years?

As I'm not knowledgeable in the area of social work, I guess I can only share what my feelings and experiences have been while I'm living in downtown new west. When I first moved into this neighborhood it seemed like it was reviving and very livable due to many new businesses opening up and new families moving in. But in the past few years, I don't feel as safe walking around the neighborhood anymore. Especially during late evenings and at night. I've seen a person openly trying to break into a car and others doing drugs in the area despite there being a police station located just a few blocks away. I've experienced some verbal hostility near Skytrain stations. Yes, these are symptoms of more complicated social issues at large and aren't caused by a

shelter. But I'd also be skeptical of a shelter's geographical location having no impact on the community it's in and the demographics of that community.

I'm in favor of operating a seasonal temporary emergency shelter for the winter months, but I feel concerned about the city committing to another long-term shelter that may operate indefinitely in this specific area.

Thank you for taking the time to read my comments.

Sincerely,  
Lu Yu