



March 5th, 2019

Minister Dorothy Shephard
Department of Social Development
Province of New Brunswick
PO Box 6000
Fredericton, NB E3B 5H1

Dear Minister Shephard:

The Cities of New Brunswick Association is writing to express its concerns regarding much needed action required for people facing homelessness and its effects on member communities. With leadership from municipalities, recent funding from the Province of New Brunswick and support from community agencies, emergency out of the cold “damp” shelters were quickly opened in both Moncton and Fredericton. This effort has provided safe shelter to close to 100 vulnerable New Brunswickers in need. Given the early and cold winter, it has saved lives!

Unfortunately, this funding and efforts surrounding emergency shelters comes to an end on March 31. Without provincial leadership, the fear is that these individuals, many who have mental health and/or addiction issues, will have no other option but to live on the street.

IMPORTANT CONCERNS:

- Jurisdiction lies with the Province of New Brunswick to address this major social issue in our communities, the need is urgent and immediate
- There is a dramatic increase in need for housing and wrap-around services
- In order to break the cycle of homelessness, a holistic, harm reduction approach must be incorporated into all provincial housing programs
- Moncton and Fredericton have identified the need for permanent “damp” shelters
- Although the situation is more severe in some cities, no city is immune and experiences these issues to some degree
- Many users of these services are newly homeless due to unforeseen circumstances and do wish to break out of the homelessness cycle as soon as possible
- The additional rent supplements announced are moving slowly
- Temporary shelters in Moncton (former Assomption Blvd Fire Station) and Fredericton (Bishop’s Residence) cannot operate past March 31, 2019 due to a multitude of site and logistical issues
- The Province of New Brunswick must find adequate permanent locations and funding for these shelters by April 1, 2019
- Clear goals are needed with measurable outcomes



In an effort to keep the momentum going, Cities wish to highlight some immediate needs and longer term goals we believe must be met to make a real difference in the lives of marginalized New Brunswickers.

IMMEDIATE NEEDS:

- Permanent “damp” shelters must be identified and funded by the Province of New Brunswick and made available beginning April 1, 2019
- A more concerted effort must be made to understand the needs of individuals and families living homeless
- Mental Health and addiction services must become more involved in all provincial housing initiatives
- Social Development must ensure proper tracking of the homeless, their needs and eventual placements

LONGER TERM SOLUTIONS:

- The problem of homelessness is not going away. Social Development is expected to develop and communicate action plans to address homelessness on a long-term basis
- Affordable housing plans must be developed and adequately funded and managed
- The supply of rent subsidies must meet the growing demand
- Property owners must be better informed of the benefits of offering subsidized housing and programs available to make subsidized units available
- The issue of homelessness must be looked at holistically with proper supports for marginalized New Brunswickers whether they be in shelters or already part of the Social Development client base

Thank you for your attention to this matter and if you require any further information on these points, do not hesitate to contact myself or members of the Fredericton or Moncton teams.

Respectfully,

Adam Lordon, President of Cities of New Brunswick Association

C. Hon. Blaine Higgs, Premier of New Brunswick
Minister Jeff Carr, Department of Environment and Local Government