

What is a Temporary Use Permit?

A Temporary Use Permit (TUP) is a permit that allows a property to be temporarily used in a manner that is not allowed in its existing zoning.

What is the Temporary Use Permit process?

1. Application is submitted.
2. Notice is provided to the public.
3. Council considers the application and the public comments, then makes a decision.
4. If approved, the Temporary Use Permit is issued and registered on the property's certificate of land title.

Why is a Temporary Use Permit for sheltering being considered?

The property's current zone (Industrial Two) does not permit shelter as an allowable use. Sheltering as a permitted use is being considered temporarily as it is expected that the purpose-built shelter at 925 Braidwood will be open in 2027.

Temporary Use Permit Public Engagement Process

Community Information Meeting – Being held September 9th	Statutory Public Notification – Newspaper ads run September 17 & 24 (legally required)
A 2-hour in-person Community Information Meeting open to the public.	Newspaper notice, information on City website
Meeting invitations and information about the application are mailed to owners and occupants surrounding 971 Cumberland Rd. The mailout radius is informed by input and observations resulting from the operation of last year's Emergency Winter Shelter.	Notice in writing to all addresses within 100 meters of 971 Cumberland Road.
Advertisement of the meeting and of the information about the application posted to City website for residents outside the mailout area.	Opportunity to send written comments only, to Council
A comment card for participants to provide their input in-person or online.	

The City of Courtenay is exceeding the legal notification requirements of a Temporary Use Permit, ensuring residents have an opportunity to learn and respond to this application.

What is being decided by Council?

Through this Temporary Use Permit application, Council is deciding whether 971 Cumberland Road should temporarily permit sheltering.

The permit does NOT specify the type of shelter, how many people may stay there, or any other operator requirements. Those details will be decided during a lease process between the City and the operator.

Why is this location being considered?

This location is:

- Owned by the City.
- Comes at a lower cost than having to rent a privately owned property.
- Located close to the core of town, near other essential services.
- Has been used in the past as a shelter and is proven to be able to operate safely and effectively in that use.
- No other locations have become available.

Last winter, services were offered at 971 Cumberland Road under an emergency decision of Council. The building was acquired by the City in 2024 and in the long term is intended to be used for City operations, but it is not yet serving that purpose. In the meantime, and without another viable option, 971 Cumberland Road is being considered as a temporary location for sheltering to fill a gap in critical services.





Why do we need a shelter?

Homelessness in the Comox Valley is increasing.

The 2023 Point-in-Time (PiT) Count recorded 272 individuals experiencing homelessness in the Comox Valley – a 106% increase from 2020.

Residents are concerned.

The City's 2023 "Your Courtenay, Your Voice" resident survey identified homelessness as the top issue in our community.

Winter weather can be deadly.

Cold, wet conditions pose significant risks to the health and life of individuals living outside. Shelters provide life-saving respite during the coldest time of the year.

Current services are not enough.

There are not enough shelter spaces or overnight indoor spaces available for everyone experiencing homelessness. This leads to the need to shelter in tents or other temporary structures in public spaces. During harsh weather in particular, these structures are often inadequate. When tents and outdoor shelters become wet, and there is not an opportunity to dry them, there is a cumulative effect and risk of exposure is higher.

Different Types of Sheltering Programs

Program Type	Hours of operation	Core Services	Staff Supports	Additional Comments
Emergency Weather Response program	Seasonal (Nov–Apr), overnight Weather-based activation	Sleeping, light meals.	Limited, typically 2-3 overnight staff. Additional staff such as security, outreach, or peers may be available depending on funding.	Services are limited by funding, only including core staffing and basic meals.
Temporary Winter Shelter	Seasonal (Nov–Apr), overnight (some 24/7), nightly from November to April	Sleeping, light meals.	2-3 overnight staff plus outreach, case workers, or other supports. Can provide additional programming where funding and/or partnerships with other organizations allow.	Consistency over the winter season improves guests' ability to be connected with other resources and access supports and services.
Year-Round Temporary Shelter	Overnight (some 24/7)	Sleeping, meals, storage, some offer day programs and services.	Basic staffing based on ratio of clients to staff. Provide referrals and operate the shelter. Can provide additional programming where funding and/or partnerships with other organizations allow.	Often operating in retrofitted or minimally adapted spaces; can feel institutional or crowded.
Purpose-Built Shelter	24/7 preferred	Sleeping, meals, hygiene, laundry, program space.	Full wraparound (clinical, housing, peer, etc.)	More effective in supporting transitions to housing. Infrastructure and staffing investments are funded.

What was offered at 971 Cumberland in 2025.

The program that will be funded fully by BC Housing at 971 Cumberland Road this winter season, if the Temporary Use Permit is approved.

What Connect is (685 Cliffe Ave), except they also offer day services to people not staying at the shelter.

925 Braidwood (expected to be open in 2027)



Lookout

Housing + Health Society

Lookout Housing and Health Society has been selected as the potential operator for winter shelter services in Courtenay for the coming winter.

Lookout Housing and Health Society currently operates a supportive housing site in Courtenay and were the operators of the Emergency Weather Response program at 971 Cumberland Road last winter.

When running the Emergency Weather Response shelter last year, Lookout Society hired a dedicated staff person to provide outreach services and extra site checks, and ensure guests could access other services when the shelter was not open. This staff member also acted as a primary contact for neighbours. A similar position would exist if shelter services were to be provided at 971 Cumberland Road again this winter.

Lookout Housing and Health Society has been providing shelter, housing, health, and other programs to vulnerable adults living with multiple challenges for over 50 years. They provide services and supports to people in twenty-two (22) communities in British Columbia.

Our Commitment

We believe helping people help themselves is essential in addressing homelessness and its many related issues. Securing appropriate housing is the first step in helping individuals attain self-sufficiency.

Mission

We are a social safety net providing a range of housing, health, and support services that promote improved wellbeing for those in need.

Find out more about their organization at: <https://lookoutsociety.ca/>

Temporary Winter Shelter Program Model

If approved, a temporary Winter Shelter, operated by Lookout Society, would provide temporary shelter and resources for homeless individuals to prevent hardships caused by winter weather conditions.

The Winter Shelter at 971 Cumberland Road would provide guests with a range of services and supports, including crisis interventions, access to a phone and Internet, and clothing provisions. There are no drop-in facilities. Many of Lookout's clientele cope with challenges such as mental illness, chronic health conditions and addictions, so shelter staff work to act as a bridge between guests and treatment services and financial supports that ultimately can end the cycle of homelessness and poverty.

Services Provided:

- **Sleeping accommodations:** Guests are provided with a mattress and bedding.
- **Meals:** A mix of hot and cold meals are provided daily.
- **Storage:** Space for storage of personal items while at the shelter is provided.
- **Staffing:** The minimum staffing requirement for this service is 2 people. During daily operating hours, the Shelter will operate with as many as 4 front-line and supportive staff roles, including Outreach and the site Manager or Coordinator.
- **Safety:** Lookout Society has a robust set of policies related to shelter safety for guests, staff, and the surrounding neighbours. Collectively these policies foster an environment of safety, respect, and trust—key components of trauma-informed care—by proactively preventing violence and promoting a supportive atmosphere for all clients and staff.
- **Cultural support:** Lookout Housing and Health Society seeks to provide culturally safe and supportive services. A smudging station and space for healing, ceremony, and connection would be provided.