



Minutes
Council's Response Committee on Housing and Emergency Shelter (CRCHES)
Committee Meeting
November 12, 2025 – 9 am
Finance Meeting Room, City Hall

Attendees: Councillor Trevor Bolin, Councillor Sarah MacDougall, Councillor Gord Klassen, Bonnie McCue, and Glennis Wunderlich (recording secretary)

Guests: Asuncion Sta. Maria, Community Development and Project Lead – Foundry Fort St. John
Melissa Cailleaux, Director of Community Programs – YMCA (via Teams)

1. Call To Order:

9:00 am

2. Approval of the Agenda:

The agenda was approved by consensus.

3. Approval of the Previous Meeting Minutes:

The October 8, 2025, CRCHES meeting minutes were provided and will be included on the next Regular Council agenda.

4. Invited Guests/Presentations

Asuncion Sta. Maria and Melissa Cailleaux attended as invited guests.

Discussions took place regarding:

Foundry, a province-wide network lead by YMCA, aims to support youths aged 12-24 that are considered mild to ultra-high risk. Foundry's Integrated Youth Services Model connects individuals with existing supports in one location including:

- Mental health services
- Physical and sexual health services
- Peer support
- Work, education, and community services
- Substance use health services.

Foundry Fort St. John is under development and anticipated to launch late 2027. In the interim, the Foundry Virtual app is offered for accessing most services available in a physical centre. Included in the plans for Foundry Fort St. John are a teaching kitchen, a cultural room, and a space for youths to socialize as well as

for community group programming. Some Foundry centres operate housing for young people. Foundry Prince George opened in 2017 and is discussing housing opportunities with BC Housing. Building a strong foundation at Foundry Fort St. John will remain the focus before considering housing opportunities.

The Foundry Fort St. John Steering Committee is composed of representatives from the following agencies:

- Saplings Mental Health Services
- Northern Health
- Community Bridge
- Divisions of Family Practice
- School District 60
- Fort St. John Women's Resource Centre

A Foundry centre's operating budget is typically funded predominantly by the province and supplemented by private donors and grants. The Ministry of Health has made a long-term commitment to provide at least \$1 million per year to each centre.

Notable trends for youths at risk of experiencing homelessness include direct causal links to mental health and substance use challenges, trauma, exposure to violence, poor health, and stress. The number of youths experiencing homelessness may be underreported as sheltered homelessness often goes unseen. However, nearly half of unhoused people say they first experienced homelessness before age 25. Reportedly, 35,000-40,000 young people are experiencing homelessness in Canada, of which estimated 40-50% are Indigenous youths.

Councillor Klassen left the meeting.

Barriers to accessing services include a lack of housing and transitional options, the limited number of shelters, existing programs are generally designed for adults, prevailing distrust of systems, and a lack of independent living or navigational skills.

Policy recommendations include development of a provincial youth homelessness prevention strategy, investments in dedicated housing outreach workers, adoption of family-inclusive approaches, and increased accessibility of rent supplements.

5. Updates and Progress Reports:

None.

6. Ongoing Discussion Items

None.

7. New Business

None.

8. Budget and Resource Planning

None.

9. Action Items

- Distribute Fall 2025 Update Report to interested parties and past meeting attendees
- Invite Erin Powers, Healthy Communities Lead to a future meeting
- Discuss with Erin Ferris the possibility of attending a Monthly Situation Table meeting as spectators

10. Adjournment

9:58 am