

CBRM Palette Shelter Village

What are Pallet Shelters?

Pallet is a public benefit corporation working to end the crisis of unsheltered homelessness. Their interim shelter solutions are designed with input from individuals with lived experience and residents living in the over 120 shelter communities around the country.

The pallet village model is centered on the provision of onsite supportive services like job placement, healthcare, and basic needs like food, water, and hygiene facilities, with the ultimate goal of creating successful transitions to permanent housing.

The shelters are placed in a “village” or community-style setting (all on one site) and are paired with on-site 24/7 staffing and supports for the residents who live there. The site will include washrooms (with showers), accessible washrooms (with showers), and laundry facilities.



Who will operate the housing?

The village in the CBRM will be operated by community partners New Dawn Enterprises and the Ally Centre. All costs associated with the shelters will be paid for by the Province of Nova Scotia. New Dawn and the Ally Centre will collaborate with village residents to transition to permanent housing as quickly as possible.

Who will live there?

Adult individuals or couples from the Cape Breton Regional Municipality (CBRM) who are currently homeless or at risk of homelessness and face barriers to being housed without supports, such as mental health or addiction supports. No children will live in the building.

The number of shelters coming to the CBRM is based on an estimate of the number of people currently living in tents throughout the CBRM. The shelters are a safer, warmer, sturdier option with 24/7 staffing.

The Ally Centre will select all residents based on their understanding of the target resident community and their existing relationships with these individuals. Those who are selected will have to be entered into the Homeless Individuals Families Information System (HIFIS) and they must take part in a vulnerability assessment. Selection will depend upon a person's acuity (need) score after taking part in the vulnerability assessment.

What type of staffing and support will occur on site?

There will be 24-hour staffing supports on site 365 days a year. The Ally Centre will staff the village with a Site Manager, full-time Peer Support Workers, and part-time Peer Support Workers. At a minimum, two qualified staff will be on-site at all times.



What is the timeline?

We're hoping to open the village in February 2024.

Why are the shelters all located on one site?

Models of supportive housing vary depending on many factors such as the acuity level of the tenants, directives from government funders, availability of appropriate land, and staffing. Some supportive housing programs intentionally disperse the units throughout a community to reduce stigma and support the growth of healthy, diverse communities; this is a successful model. The tenants of the Pallet Shelters will benefit from 24/7 knowledgeable and compassionate on-site staff. This level of support would not be possible if the units were spread out over multiple sites.

Additionally, the Pallet Shelters are an emergency response to our housing crisis. The operational timeline and costs would be significantly increased if partners were to locate and then prepare (water, sanitary, power hook-ups) multiple sites.

How was the land selected?

Many factors went into selecting a location: provincially owned land, proximity to amenities such as bus stops, grocery stores, and pharmacies, relatively level land that could be quickly and adequately prepared including connections to water, sewer, distance from support services, etc. Some provincially owned lands (like Open Hearth Park/SPAR road) have covenants that prevent developments that include overnight accommodations.

The company designing and manufacturing the homes has an extensive list of dignity standards that must be met on the site and by the host organizations (onsite support staff, washrooms, proximity to services and transit) before the homes will be shipped.

Project partners agreed on a site located in Whitney Pier. The exact location won't be shared at this time to help protect the safety and dignity of future residents.

How long will these shelters be in place?

The CBRM palette village is a temporary development. It is likely that many of the residents of the palette village will transition into the rapid housing development opening to 25 tenants in late 2024.

The focus of the preparation team at present is on getting the units in place as soon as possible and preventing deaths like those that have happened in encampments in Halifax and St. John, NB.

Once residents settle in, staff will have the opportunity to work with residents on their individual path to permanent housing and the administration team (New Dawn, Ally Centre, and Province of Nova Scotia) will be able to assess what additional building of permanent supportive housing will be required.

Who is funding the Pallet Shelters?

The province of Nova Scotia.

What kind of positive contribution will the development make to the neighbourhood?

The residents who will live in the village are contributing members of our community. They will bring a diverse range of knowledge and talent, which has often been hidden in poverty, to the neighbourhood.

Most importantly, the individuals who move into the Pallet Shelters have been struggling immensely with housing and the many physical and mental consequences that come from precarious housing. When these individuals are housed in a safe and secure home, we anticipate that they will be able to more fully express themselves and engage more deeply in their community.

Who is the primary contact for the development?

Alyce Maclean, Project Manager of Housing Development, New Dawn Enterprises. Alyce can be reached at amaclean@newdawn.ca or (902) 539-9560 ext. 257.

Additional Information

You can read about the company and the shelter solutions on their website: <https://palletshelter.com/>.

You can listen to an interview with the CEO of Pallet on the shelters being provided to Nova Scotia here: <https://www.cbc.ca/player/play/2274589763654>

