



Letter of Intent

Re: **302 8th Street Brandon MB R7A 3X4**

November 22, 2023

Dear Community Planner,

On behalf of the Brandon Neighborhood Renewal Corporation (BNRC), I am applying to change the land use to a use substantially similar to a community centre, at 302 8th Street Brandon. Approving this variance will allow the Blue Door to expand its services into nighttime drop in for our vulnerable population who are unhoused.

The Blue Door, which currently operates from 31A-9th Street, serves as a vital daytime drop-in centre (similar to that of a coffee shop) where clients can access a range of services. These services include assistance with ID and birth certificate applications, referrals to other essential services and resources, laundry facilities, showers, and a safe and welcoming space for relaxation and socialization with peers and support workers. Our organization has been successfully receiving funding from Reaching Home, a Federal Government initiative, which has allowed us to operate the Blue Door program effectively.

However, we have recognized a growing need within our community for additional services, particularly overnight during the winter season. We have secured funding from the provincial government to operate a winter nighttime drop-in center from now until March 31, 2024, so that clients are not trying to seek warmth in store fronts. The City of Brandon has experienced the need for overnight services especially last winter when our community sprung into action when the Safe and Warm shelter exceeded its capacity and the Blue Door had to open for a few overnights so that clients do not freeze during the frigid winter. This expansion will enable us to provide round-the-clock support to those in need. The strategic location of 302 8th Street, in close proximity to the Safe and Warm Shelter and other resources, makes it an ideal location for overnight services.

To ensure the safety and well-being of both our clients and the surrounding community, we have developed a comprehensive plan in partnership with The City of Brandon. This plan includes the deployment of cadet/security patrols to maintain order and prevent loitering in front of the building. We will also encourage the use of the back entrance to minimize any disruptions to the neighborhood.

The BNRC had previously submitted a variance application to utilize 817 Rosser Avenue for this overnight initiative and unfortunately that application was rejected by the Planning Commission



primarily due to the fact that 817 Rosser Avenue is in the midst of the Downtown Business District. The Downtown Business owners objected to the application in the spirit of Downtown revitalization; echoing sentiments surrounding the appropriateness of the location for such initiatives. Following the rejection at the public hearing on November 1, 2023. The BNRC ramped up its search for an ideal location. We, in collaboration with Mayor Fawcett humbly approached a few church groups and two groups were willing to provide access to their space for the initiative listed above. The addresses are:

- 1) 302 8th Street Brandon
- 2) 1037 Lorne Avenue

Between the two church groups we narrowed down on the location with the larger space (302 8th Street.).

I would also like to mention that 302 8th street is outside of the commercial corridor and our utilization of this space for overnight drop-in should pose no threats to downtown or surrounding businesses or residence. Please note that this location will not be used as shelter. There will be no beds, but instead we will have chairs and tables for persons to sit in during the night. It is important to note that this is not intended to be a recurring request each winter. We seek approval to utilized this particular space this winter while we continue our efforts in trying to find a suitable permanent Blue Door location.

The proposed overnight drop in use is not in the Zoning Bylaw but this use would function similar to an assembly place, which is permitted in Commercial General (CG) Zone. The Planning Act permits application for a variance to change a land use to a use that is substantially similar to a permitted use under the Zoning Bylaw. The Brandon & Area Planning District Development Plan also permits smaller scale community uses in various parts of the city, such as this site, as the proposed scale and use are reasonably compatible with the area.

Please feel free to contact me at 204-729-2490 ext 101 or via email at director@bnrc.ca for questions, concerns or more information.

We are excited about the potential positive impact of this project on our community and look forward to a favourable response from this variance application.

Sincerely,

Rushana Newman
Executive Director