

Warming Centres

Locations & Capacity: Winter 2019/20 & Winter 2020/21

Date produced: February 22, 2021

Learn more about this project:

[Changes in informal access to selected indoor public spaces in Toronto](#)

What these maps capture

All city-funded 24-hour warming centres for the winters of 2019/20 and 2020/21.

Quick information

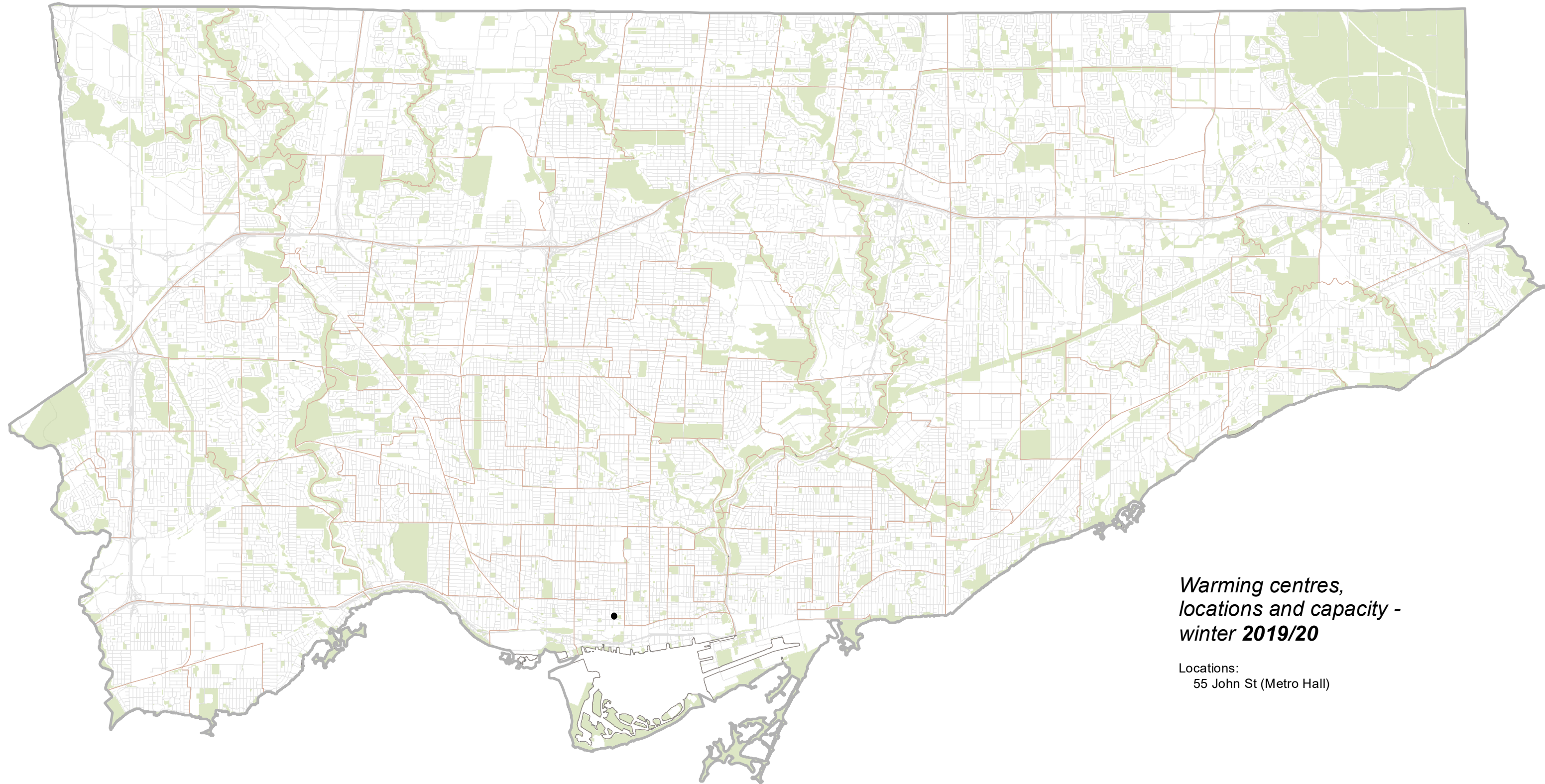
- Warming centres are opened during extreme cold weather alerts, or in other circumstances at the City's discretion. When they are open, they operate 24-hours a day.
- In 2019/20, the City had one warming centre with a capacity of 50. In 2020/21, they have four warming centres, with the capacity to accommodate between 130 to 145 people city-wide.¹
- Based on the information that is publicly-available in the ["Homeless Help" section](#) of City's website and through the [Toronto Drop-In Network](#), we understand that warming centres are likely more able to receive walk-ins than City services such as respites, 24-hour women's drop-ins, and shelters. This makes warming centres the City service currently best-positioned to compensate for the loss of public indoor space city-wide, in particular overnight.²
- The increase in capacity of approximately 95 spaces over 2019/20, while positive, does not compensate for the loss of public indoor space city-wide, in particular since warming centres are not open all the time.
- According to the City's shelter census, at 4:00 am on February 21 2021, the four warming centres had a combined capacity of 130 spaces, and were all at 100 per cent occupancy. The capacity for warming centres seems to fluctuate between approximately 130 and 145 spaces, presumably due to COVID-19 outbreaks.
- Access to public indoor space will remain important, even after the cold weather subsides. Pandemic restrictions may continue for many months to come. People will continue to need easy, walk-in access to indoor space.

Data sources for map

- Data for 2019/20 taken from City of Toronto [2019/20 Winter Plan](#) for People Experiencing Homelessness
- Data for 2020/21 taken from City of Toronto 2020/21 [Winter Services Plan](#), the [shelter census](#) for February 21 2020 and the “[Homeless Help](#)” section of the City’s website.

Notes

1. Warming centre capacity is listed as 130 for the night of Feb 21 in the [shelter census](#), the last night before we began finalizing this report. After observing the shelter census for the past two months, warming centre capacity seems to fluctuate between 130 and 145 spaces, presumably due to COVID-19 outbreaks.
2. How we concluded that warming centres are likely more open to walk-ins than other overnight City services:
 - The “[Homeless Help](#)” section of the City’s website has separate pages for respites and for warming centres. When a user navigates to the “24-hr respite site” page, a pop-up appears asking people to call central intake or 311 and cautioning that, “[Temporary shelter and respite sites may not have space to accommodate walk-in referrals. Calling Central Intake in advance is recommended to minimize unnecessary travel...](#)” This same caution is included on the page itself. When a user navigates to the “[warming centres](#)” section of the City’s website, there is no pop-up cautioning people to call before walking in. In addition, there is no warning about calling ahead on the page itself.
 - The Toronto Drop-In Network maintains [a resource](#) related to member drop-ins, including the two 24-hour women’s drop-ins. We accessed the resource on February 20, 2020. One of the 24-hour women’s drop-ins was, “Not accepting new referrals at this time. Open to current participants only.” The other was, “Not accepting new referrals at this time except through Central Intake.” Please note, the resource is a live link, and information will change.



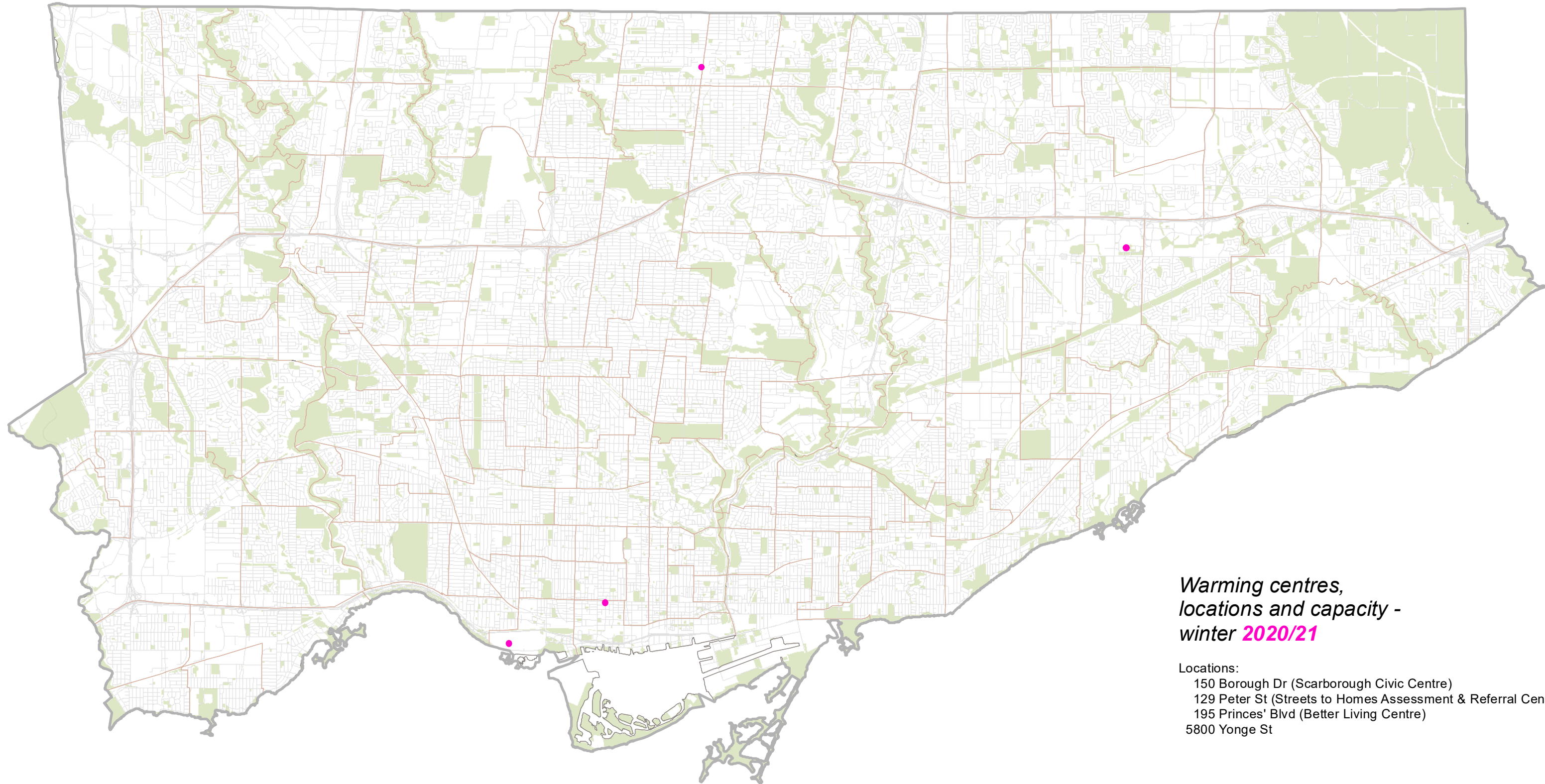
***Warming centres,
locations and capacity -
winter 2019/20***

Locations:
55 John St (Metro Hall)

Capacity: **50**

- Locations
- Street Grid
- Neighbourhood Boundaries
- Green Space

- (1) What this map captures: All City warming centres.
- (2) Data snapshot taken Feb 22, 2021. For data sources, please see fact sheet.
- (3) This map is not intended as a resource and will not be updated.



**Warming centres,
locations and capacity -
winter 2020/21**

Locations:
150 Borough Dr (Scarborough Civic Centre)
129 Peter St (Streets to Homes Assessment & Referral Centre)
195 Princes' Blvd (Better Living Centre)
5800 Yonge St

Combined capacity: 130*

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* Warming centre capacity is listed as 130 for the night of Feb 21 in the shelter census, the last night before we began finalizing this report. After observing the shelter census for the past two months, warming centre capacity seems to fluctuate between 130 and 145 spaces, presumably due to COVID-19 outbreaks.