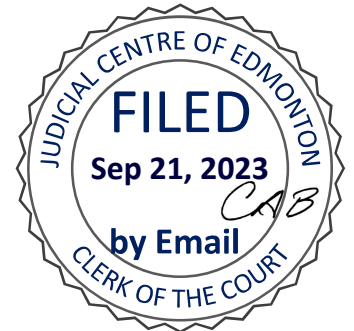


COURT FILE NUMBER 2303 15571
COURT COURT OF KING'S BENCH OF ALBERTA
JUDICIAL CENTRE EDMONTON
PLAINTIFF COALITION FOR JUSTICE AND HUMAN RIGHTS LTD.
DEFENDANT CITY OF EDMONTON
DOCUMENT **AFFIDAVIT**
ADDRESS FOR SERVICE AND CONTACT NANDA & COMPANY
INFORMATION OF PARTY ATTN: Avnish Nanda
FILING THIS DOCUMENT 10007 80 Avenue NW
Edmonton, AB T6E 1T4
Tel: 587-400-1253
Fax: 587-318-1391
Email: avnish@nandalaw.ca
File No.: 56.00003



INV E91575

AFFIDAVIT OF DEVYN ENS

Sworn on September 15, 2023

I, Devyn Ens, of Edmonton, Alberta, SWEAR AND SAY THAT:

1. I am a paralegal at Nanda & Company, the law firm acting as co-counsel for the Plaintiff in this action, and as such, have personal knowledge of the matters set out in this affidavit, except to such matters based on information and belief.
2. I make this affidavit in support of the Plaintiff's civil claim and application for injunctive relief against the Defendant. Attached to my affidavit as exhibits are publicly available records and resources, records obtained by Engel Law Office through requests under the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*, and a complaint under the *Police Act*.
3. The documents contained in my affidavit were provided to me for my review by Chris Wiebe of Engel Law Office. Mr. Wiebe is co-counsel for the Plaintiff in this action.

Online Resources from Homeward Trust

4. Attached as **Exhibit "A"** are portions of a glossary of terms and definitions from Homeward Trust Edmonton.
5. Attached at **Exhibit "B"** are graphs and charts with data from Homeward Trust Edmonton that illustrate:
 - a. the number of unhoused Edmontonians according to Point-in-Time Counts from 2014-2023;

- b. the places where unhoused Edmontonians stay and the proportions of Indigenous and non-Indigenous unhouse Edmontonians as of August 2023, and
- c. shelter capacity and usage from August 28, 2021 until August 1, 2023.

Reports Prepared or Commissioned by the City of Edmonton

- 6. Attached as **Exhibit “C”** is a City of Edmonton report to City Council’s Community and Public Services Committee from October 17, 2022. The following are quotes from the report:
 - a. “As of October 12, 2022, Homeward Trust’s By Name List indicates that more than 2,650 Edmontonians are experiencing homelessness. Of those on the list, over 1,300 people self-identify as primarily sleeping in emergency shelters or outdoors.”¹
 - b. “450 additional temporary emergency shelter spaces for winter 2022/23 and winter 2023/24...will increase shelter spaces in Edmonton to 1,072 total spaces during the winter months.”²
 - c. “Despite making up only five per cent of Edmonton’s overall population, roughly 60 per cent of [unhoused] Edmontonians are Indigenous.”³
 - d. “In addition to the ongoing barriers individuals experiencing homelessness face in accessing public services like transportation, regular and appropriate health care, food, and shelter, the identities of those individuals intersect with other equity-seeking groups. The experience of racialized and two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and plus (2SLGBTQ+) community members experiencing homelessness is uniquely challenging in that they face additional discrimination and lack of appropriate support when trying to access existing shelter, housing and social service systems. People with disabilities and significant health challenges are over-represented among those experiencing homelessness – being homeless also worsens health issues and creates and elevated risk of new health issues and death.”⁴
- 7. Attached as **Exhibit “D”** is a City of Edmonton report with two attachments presented to City Council’s Community and Public Services Committee on May 1, 2023. The following are quotes from the report or the two attachments:
 - a. “According to Homeward Trust’s By Name List, over the winter of 2022/23, between 2,650 and 2,800 Edmontonians were experiencing homelessness at any one time. Of those on the list, between 1,250 and 1,350 people self-identified as primarily sleeping in emergency shelters or outdoors.

¹ Exhibit “C”, page 23 of this affidavit.

² Exhibit “C”, page 24 of this affidavit.

³ Exhibit “C”, page 26 of this affidavit.

⁴ Exhibit “C”, page 26 of this affidavit.

Over the course of the winter approximately 1,202 emergency shelter spaces were made available by the Government of Alberta, including 627 permanent and 575 temporary emergency shelter spaces. In addition to 1,202 Government of Alberta funded shelter spaces, the Al Rashid Mosque provided up to 75 shelter spaces during extreme weather activations and the West End Shelter (former Bedford Inn), funded by the City, provided up to 150 shelter spaces.

The Government of Alberta funded shelters were routinely at over 70 per cent capacity during non-extreme weather times and over 75 per cent capacity during extreme weather events. While the shelter system never exceeded capacity during winter 2022/23, large numbers of vulnerable Edmontonians were still found to be sheltering in transit facilities. Between January 1 and February 28, 2023, an average of 225 individuals were removed from ETS facilities during nightly lock-up procedures, with an average of 106 individuals refusing transportation to shelter on the shuttle bus per night, when offered during weather-related responses.”⁵

- b. “... of those individuals currently experiencing homelessness, 58 per cent identify as Indigenous.”⁶
- c. “In the 2022/23 winter season, the City took a two-staged approach to extreme weather and protecting the City’s vulnerable community in transit facilities. The Winter Response was activated when the weather fell between -10 degrees C and -20 degrees C... The Extreme Weather Response was activated when the weather fell below -20 degrees C including windchill for a period of 72 hours or longer.”⁷
 - i. During extreme weather activations, “encampment response teams conducted wellness checks and only addressed high-risk encampments.”⁸
- d. “Edmonton’s current shelter system is not meeting the needs of many individuals experiencing homelessness, with people sleeping outside or in places unsuitable for habitation, such as transit facilities. Edmonton has approximately 629 permanent emergency shelter spaces and approximately 1,360 individuals who identify as most frequently sleeping in shelter or outdoors on Homeward Trust’s By Name List. This past winter, temporary measures increased the number of shelter spaces available by 575 for a total of 1,202 beds. However, Edmonton still experienced a large number of people sleeping outdoors this winter or seeking shelter from the elements in transit facilities.”⁹

⁵ Exhibit “D”, pages 30-31 of this affidavit.

⁶ Exhibit “D”, page 35 of this affidavit.

⁷ Exhibit “D”, page 39 of this affidavit.

⁸ Exhibit “D”, page 31 of this affidavit.

⁹ Exhibit “D”, page 46 of this affidavit.

8. Attached as **Exhibit “E”** are pages from the City of Edmonton’s “Responses to City Council Questions on the 2023-2026 Proposed Operating Budget”, which relate to the City of Edmonton’s budgetary considerations in relation to encampments.
9. Attached as **Exhibit “F”** is a report titled “Staying Outside is Not a Preference: Homelessness in Edmonton” that the City of Edmonton commissioned and that a community research organization called M.A.P.S. Alberta Capital Region’s prepared. The following are quotes or data from the report:
 - a. “To learn about experiences of staying outside, the following entities were included in the research: 86 community participants who had been banned and stayed outside within the past 12 months...10 staff from Human Services agencies, 6 City of Edmonton staff involved in encampment response, 4 Mutual Aid group volunteers.”¹⁰
 - b. “Three in four community members (64) identified as Indigenous. Indigenous participants came from 30 First Nations or communities. The Saddle Lake Cree Nation was most heavily represented with 8 respondents. The majority of Indigenous participants were First Nations - Treaty at 62%, followed by Métis at 25%, Non-status Treaty at 10%, and finally Inuit at 3%. While 2 in 3 Indigenous participants had personal experience at residential schools, day school, and/or the foster care system, almost all had relatives or friends with this experience.”¹¹
 - c. “The majority of participants experienced health challenges (Trauma - 76%; Addiction/Substance Use - 74%; Medical illness or condition - 70%; Mental health - 62%; Physical disability - 57%)”¹²
 - d. “In the survey, participants were asked whether staying outside was a choice. Two in three (67%) said that they did not prefer to stay outside. The remaining 33% preferred staying outside.

The principal reasons that participants do not stay in shelters is that they did not feel safe, and that shelters are overcrowded.”¹³
 - e. 56% of the survey participants cited personal safety as a factor in deciding where to stay outside.¹⁴
 - f. “Many who stay outside share stories of constantly being displaced every 24-48 hours.

¹⁰ Exhibit “F”, page 77 of this affidavit.

¹¹ Exhibit “F”, page 78 of this affidavit.

¹² Exhibit “F”, page 66 of this affidavit.

¹³ Exhibit “F”, page 85 of this affidavit.

¹⁴ Exhibit “F”, page 87 of this affidavit.

Being moved means no one knows where we are, and we have to wait for services because we cannot be found.

Give someone time for preparation. You can't uproot somebody who has no next place."¹⁵

- g. "The personal possessions of homeless people are in-fact their possessions. Confiscating, destroying, or failing to return them after storing them, is understood as theft by community members. It is also important to note that if people do not have their essential items, such as identification and medications, with them at all times, they may be lost when their tents are removed.

Don't throw our property in the garbage. Do not throw our carts away... I have no safe place to put my backpack. Do not take our tents."¹⁶

- h. "[City of Edmonton] representatives...reported that they no longer issue tickets and that the slashing of tents is not a part of their practice, however, community members and mutual aid workers reported that these practices are current."¹⁷
- i. "Community participants reported that their tents were destroyed by enforcement teams. City of Edmonton staff explained that tents are only removed after a site has been vacated and that tents may have to be cut open in order to protect the safety of workers as contents are considered bio-hazards. They asserted that tents are not cut for the purpose of making them unusable."¹⁸

Records Obtained by Engel Law Office under FOIPPA or the Police Act

10. Attached as **Exhibit "G"** are data received by Engel Law Office from the City of Edmonton through a Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act ("**FOIPPA**") request. The data shows that from October 1, 2021 until March 31, 2023, the City of Edmonton closed 1,127 active encampments, including:
- a. 14 encampments within the time period November 29 - December 26, 2022;
 - b. one encampment within the time period February 19 - 24, 2023; and
 - c. 10 encampments within the time period March 4 - 12, 2023.¹⁹
11. Attached as **Exhibit "H"** are Edmonton Police Service ("EPS") High Risk Encampment Team ("**HRET**") downtown encampment highlight reports obtained through a FOIPPA request. The records include data that shows, within the time period May 1 - September 3, 2022, EPS HRET classified:

¹⁵ Exhibit "F", page 99 of this affidavit.

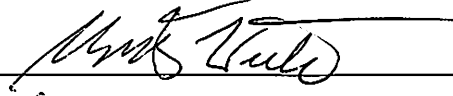
¹⁶ Exhibit "F", page 99 of this affidavit.

¹⁷ Exhibit "F", page 101 of this affidavit.

¹⁸ Exhibit "F", page 103 of this affidavit.

¹⁹ Exhibit "G", pages 118-119 of this affidavit.

This is Exhibit "A" referred to in the Affidavit of
Devyn Ens, sworn this 15th day of September, 2023



CHRISTOPHER WIEGKE
LAWYER

GLOSSARY

Commonly used sector terms – Edmonton region.

Last updated: May 18, 2022

The following terms and definitions are commonly used within Edmonton’s homeless-serving system. This glossary is provided to support Edmontonians with a general understanding of the terms used across the housing and homelessness sector. The definitions are not all-encompassing and intended to be a reference tool.

All terms are operationally defined within the confines of Homeward Trust.

This glossary is a living document, subject to change to reflect the evolving use of language.

subsequent housing in place; irreparable damage or deterioration to residences; and fleeing from family violence. (*Edmonton's Updated Plan to End Homelessness* (<http://endhomelessnessyeg.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Edmonton-Full-Booklet-web.pdf>))

B

BRIDGE HOUSING: A short-term, continuous stay accommodation that helps people 'bridge' the gap from homelessness to permanent housing. On site and in-reach support are offered to assist individuals with meeting basic needs, while individuals work with community supports to secure permanent housing as rapidly as possible. Residents stay for an average of 30 to 90 days before moving on to housing that works for them.

BY NAME LIST (BNL): All known individuals experiencing homelessness in Edmonton who have connected with an access point for housing assistance. In Edmonton, there are over 60 access points where individuals and families can be screened and enrolled on the BNL.

C

CHRONIC HOMELESSNESS: Those who have either been experiencing homelessness continuously for a year or more or have experienced at least four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. People experiencing chronic homelessness face long term and ongoing homelessness related to complex and persistent barriers related to health, mental health, and addictions.

Chronic homelessness includes time spent in the following contexts:

Staying in unsheltered locations, that is public or private spaces without consent or contract, or places not intended for permanent human habitation (Canadian Observatory on Homelessness (COH) Typology: 1.1 and 1.2).

In Edmonton, the Coordinated Access Program is operated by the team at Homeward Trust and includes the network of 60+ participating agencies across the city. Community-wide participation in Coordinated Access is supported by a centralized database system called Efforts to Outcomes (ETO) and training of front-line staff.

CORE HOUSING NEED: A household is in core housing need if its housing does not meet one or more of the adequacy, suitability or affordability standards and it would have to spend 30% or more of its before-tax income to access local housing that meets all three standards.

(*Edmonton's Updated Plan to End Homelessness* (<http://endhomelessnessyeg.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Edmonton-Full-Booklet-web.pdf>))

COUCH SURFING: Temporarily sleeping at friends and/or family's places on a regular or intermittent basis, moving from household to household. (*Edmonton's Updated Plan to End Homelessness* (<http://endhomelessnessyeg.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Edmonton-Full-Booklet-web.pdf>))

D

DIVERSION*: An upstream intervention to prevent and end experiences of chronic homelessness. It supports individuals and families in resolving an experience of homelessness as independently as possible, working with the person to identify a housing plan and supporting them to action it. A variety of Diversion applications exist at present including Shelter Diversion, Diversion from Chronic Homelessness and in some cases as a method of prevention.

E

EMERGENCY SHELTER*: Any facility with the primary purpose of providing temporary accommodations and essential services for homeless individuals. Such accommodation represents a stop-gap institutional response to homelessness provided by government, non-profit, faith-based organizations and/or volunteers.

ENCAMPMENT: An outdoor makeshift camp site with one or more visible structures such as tents or shacks.

EPISODIC HOMELESSNESS*: A person who has been experiencing homelessness for less than a year and has fewer than four episodes of homelessness in the past three years. Typically, those classified as episodically homeless have recurring episodes of homelessness as a result of complex issues such as addictions or family violence.

EVIDENCE-BASED PRACTICE OR BEST PRACTICE: An intervention or approach that consistently produces better results than alternatives, as evaluated through rigorous scientific research. Its effectiveness must be proven across several cases or examples, and there must be evidence that it will be effective across different contexts (e.g., different cities).

EXTREME CORE HOUSING NEED: Refers to extreme housing affordability and very low income issues for households who were earning less than \$20,000 per year and paying 50% or more of their income on shelter costs. (*Edmonton's Updated Plan to End Homelessness* (<http://endhomelessnessyeg.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Edmonton-Full-Booklet-web.pdf>))

F

FAMILY: In the context of homelessness, those who are homeless and are: parents with minor children; adults with legal custody of children; a couple in which one person is pregnant; multi-generational families; and/or part of an adult interdependent partnership. (*Edmonton's Updated Plan to End Homelessness* (<http://endhomelessnessyeg.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Edmonton-Full-Booklet-web.pdf>))

FUNCTIONAL ZERO: Regarding homelessness, functional zero means that homelessness is prevented whenever possible, and that experiences of homelessness are rare, brief and non-recurring. Functional zero on chronic homelessness is achieved when the number of people experiencing chronic homelessness is zero, or if not zero, then either 3 or .1% of the total

number of individuals experiencing homelessness, whichever is greater. Functional zero chronic homelessness is confirmed when this goal is reached and sustained over three consecutive months, as measured through a quality By-Name List (that includes complete and reliable data for single adults, youth and families).

H

HARM REDUCTION*: A public health strategy designed to reduce harm and the negative consequences related to substance abuse, without requiring the cessation of substance use. The aim of harm reduction is to reduce both the risks and effects associated with substance use and addiction at the level of the individual, community, and society without requiring abstinence.

A recovery-oriented approach (<https://www.albertahealthservices.ca/assets/info/hrs/if-hrs-recovery-oriented-care.pdf>) to harm reduction uses strategies to empower people to use their strengths and skills to help them lead the life that they choose when experiencing substance use and mental health issues. Recovery-oriented care involves healthcare providers working with individuals and their families to reach their chosen recovery goals. Healthcare providers build on personal strengths and skills to enhance health outcomes and quality of life. This includes a broad range of activities that are person-centred and promote resilience.

HOMELESSNESS*: The situation of an individual, family, or community without stable, safe, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means and ability of acquiring it. It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination. Most people do not choose to be homeless, and the experience is generally negative, unpleasant, unhealthy, unsafe, stressful and distressing.

Homelessness encompasses a range of physical living situations, including:

- Unsheltered, or absolutely homeless and living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation;
- Emergency Sheltered, including those staying in overnight shelters for people who are homeless, as well as shelters for those impacted by family violence;
- Provisionally Accommodated, referring to those whose accommodation is temporary or lacks security of tenure, and finally,

- At Risk of Homelessness, referring to people who are not homeless, but whose current economic and/or housing situation is precarious or does not meet public health and safety standards. It should be noted that for many people homelessness is not a static state but rather a fluid experience, where one's shelter circumstances and options may shift and change quite dramatically and with frequency. (*Canadian Observatory on Homelessness* (<https://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/COHhomelesdefinition-1pager.pdf>))

HOMELESS POINT-IN-TIME (PIT) COUNT: Point-in-time homeless counts provide a snapshot of the population experiencing homelessness at a point in time. Basic demographic information is collected from emergency shelters and short-term housing facilities, and a survey is done with those enumerated through a street count. Public systems, including health and corrections, provide numbers of those without fixed address on the night of the count as well. (*Edmonton's Updated Plan to End Homelessness* (<http://endhomelessnessyeg.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Edmonton-Full-Booklet-web.pdf>))

HOMELESS-SERVING SYSTEM: A range of local or regional service delivery components serving those who are experiencing homelessness or at imminent risk of homelessness. Edmonton's system comprises of key components or building blocks that work together towards system goals.

HOUSING FIRST (HF)*: An approach that involves moving people who experience homelessness into independent and permanent housing as quickly as possible, with no preconditions, and then providing them with additional supports and services as needed. It is a proven intervention, moving people from an experience of homelessness to stability with support to access services to achieve long-term success.

|

INDIGENOUS HOMELESSNESS: As defined by Jesse A. Thistle, Indigenous homelessness is a human condition that describes First Nations, Métis and Inuit individuals, families or communities lacking stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means

or ability to acquire such housing. Unlike the common colonialist definition of homelessness, Indigenous homelessness is not defined as lacking a structure of habitation; rather, it is more fully described and understood through a composite lens of Indigenous worldviews. These include: individuals, families and communities isolated from their relationships to land, water, place, family, kin, each other, animals, cultures, languages and identities. Importantly, Indigenous people experiencing these kinds of homelessness cannot culturally, spiritually, emotionally or physically reconnect with their Indigeneity or lost relationships. (*Indigenous Definition of Homelessness in Canada*)
(<https://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/attachments/COHIndigenousHomelessnessDefinition>)

INTENSIVE CASE MANAGEMENT (ICM): A team-based approach to support individuals, the goal of which is to help clients maintain their housing and achieve an optimum quality of life through developing plans, enhancing life skills, addressing mental and physical health needs, engaging in meaningful activities and building social and community relations. It is designed for clients with lower acuity, but who are identified as needing intensive support for a shorter and time-delineated period. (*Edmonton's Updated Plan to End Homelessness*)
(<http://endhomelessnessyeg.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Edmonton-Full-Booklet-web.pdf>)

L

LIVED EXPERIENCE: A person, adult or youth, who has experienced homelessness. Personal knowledge about the world gained through direct, first-hand involvement in everyday events rather than through representations constructed by other people.

M

MAKING THE SHIFT (MtS): A Youth Homelessness Social Innovation Lab with a mandate to contribute to the transformation of how we respond to youth homelessness through research and knowledge mobilization specific to youth homelessness prevention and housing

SUPPORTIVE HOUSING (SH)*: Supportive Housing combines affordable housing for individuals with complex needs with programs that offer voluntary access to on-site health and social supports to help people who have experienced chronic or episodic homelessness access and maintain safe and affordable housing. Previously referred to as permanent supportive housing (PSH).

SYSTEM PLANNER: A dedicated and community-based organization leading day-to-day system operations and strategy work to end homelessness. The System Planner Organization is designated to align funding streams, identify needs quickly and adapt programming. In Edmonton, Homeward Trust serves as the System Planner Organization.

T

TRANSITIONAL HOUSING*: Transitional housing is conceptualized as an intermediate step between emergency crisis shelter and permanent housing. It is more long-term, service-intensive and private than emergency shelters, yet remains time-limited to stays of three months to three years. It is meant to provide a safe, supportive environment where residents can overcome trauma, begin to address the issues that led to homelessness or kept them homeless, and begin to rebuild their support network. (*Homeless Hub*). Transitional housing is considered synonymous with interim housing.

U

UNSHELTERED: An individual/family experiencing living on the streets or in places not intended for human habitation. This includes people who are not accessing emergency shelters. People who are unsheltered, lacking housing and not accessing emergency shelters or accommodation. In most cases, people who are unsheltered are staying in places not designed for or fit for human habitation, including: people living in public or private spaces without consent or contract (public space such as sidewalks, squares, parks or forests; and private space and vacant buildings, including squatting), or in places not intended for permanent human habitation

(including cars or other vehicles, garages, attics, closets or buildings not designed for habitation, or in makeshift shelters, shacks or tents). (*Edmonton's Updated Plan to End Homelessness* (<http://endhomelessnessyeg.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Edmonton-Full-Booklet-web.pdf>))

V


VI-SPDAT*: The Vulnerability Index – Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool (VI-SPDAT) is an initial screening to learn about the individual's current circumstance for the purpose of matching to housing programs and services. This is a 10-15-minute survey-style triage tool which can be completed in-person or over the phone.

Y

YOUTH HOMELESSNESS: A youth experiencing homelessness is an unaccompanied person aged 24 and under lacking a permanent night-time residence. They can be living on the street, in shelters, couch surfing, in unsafe and insecure housing, and / or living in abusive situations. They may also be about to be discharged without the security of a regular residence from a care, correction, health, or any other facility. (*Edmonton's Updated Plan to End Homelessness* (<http://endhomelessnessyeg.ca/wp-content/uploads/2017/07/Edmonton-Full-Booklet-web.pdf>))

YOUTH HOUSING FIRST*: A Housing First program for youth aged 16 to 24 with no readiness requirements. Youth are housed through a variety of housing options (e.g., independent living, supported independent living placements, family reunification) and provided with support to help them successfully transition to adulthood. In Edmonton, e4c, Edmonton John Howard Society, Bent Arrow and Native Counselling Services of Alberta offer Youth Housing First.

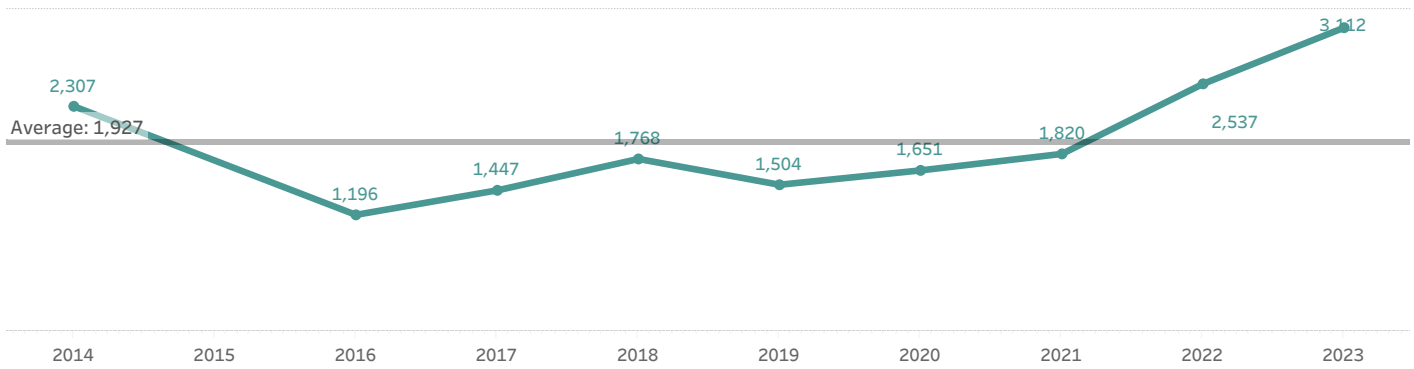
This is Exhibit "B" referred to in the Affidavit of
Devyn Ens, sworn this 15th day of September, 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Wise", written over a horizontal line.

CHRISTOPHER WISE
LAWYER

People experiencing homelessness since 1999

Year
July 2013 to April 2023



* Numbers from 1999 to 2016 are from Point-In-Time Counts conducted in the spring or fall.

Data from 2017 to 2021 show the number of people from the By Name List as of the end of April of each year.

Year 2022 shows the BNL total until the end of December.

Year 2023 shows the BNL total for the year to date.

Edmonton By Name List

Data valid as of: 2023-08-07

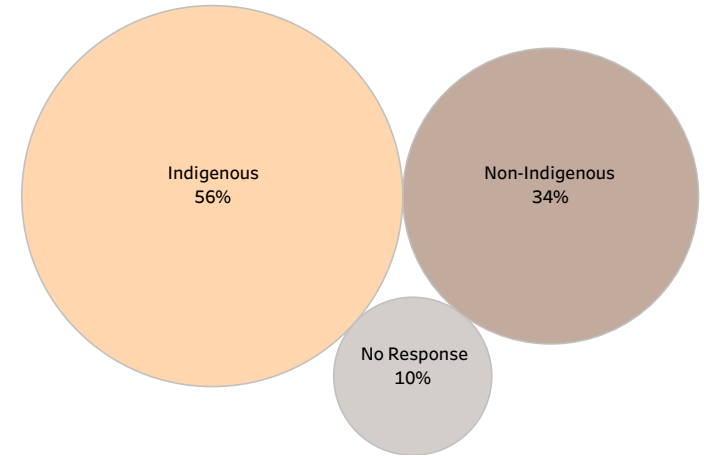
You are viewing
Everyone on the BNL

Select a row/bubble view
Ethnicity

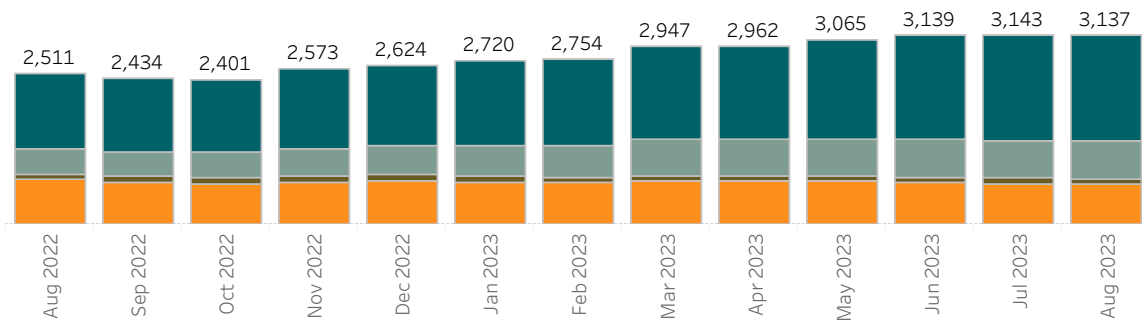
Select a column view
Location of most frequent stay

Month
August 2023

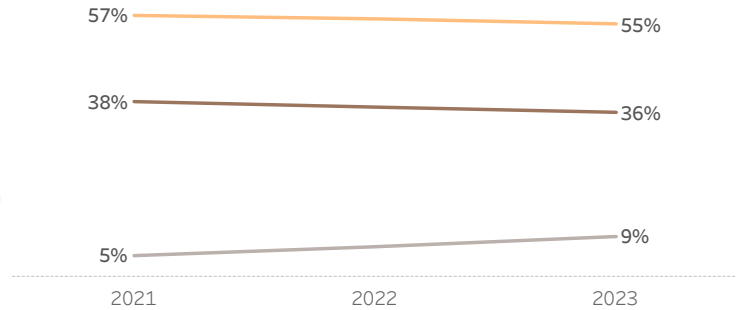
	Provisionally accommodated	Shelters	Unknown	Unsheltered	Grand Total
Indigenous	1,035	312	32	389	1,768
No Response	201	54	9	40	304
Non-Indigenous	521	258	43	243	1,065
Grand Total	1,757	624	84	672	3,137



People experiencing homelessness over time by place of most frequent stay



Trend in BNL proportion (yearly average)



Shelter Usage Overtime

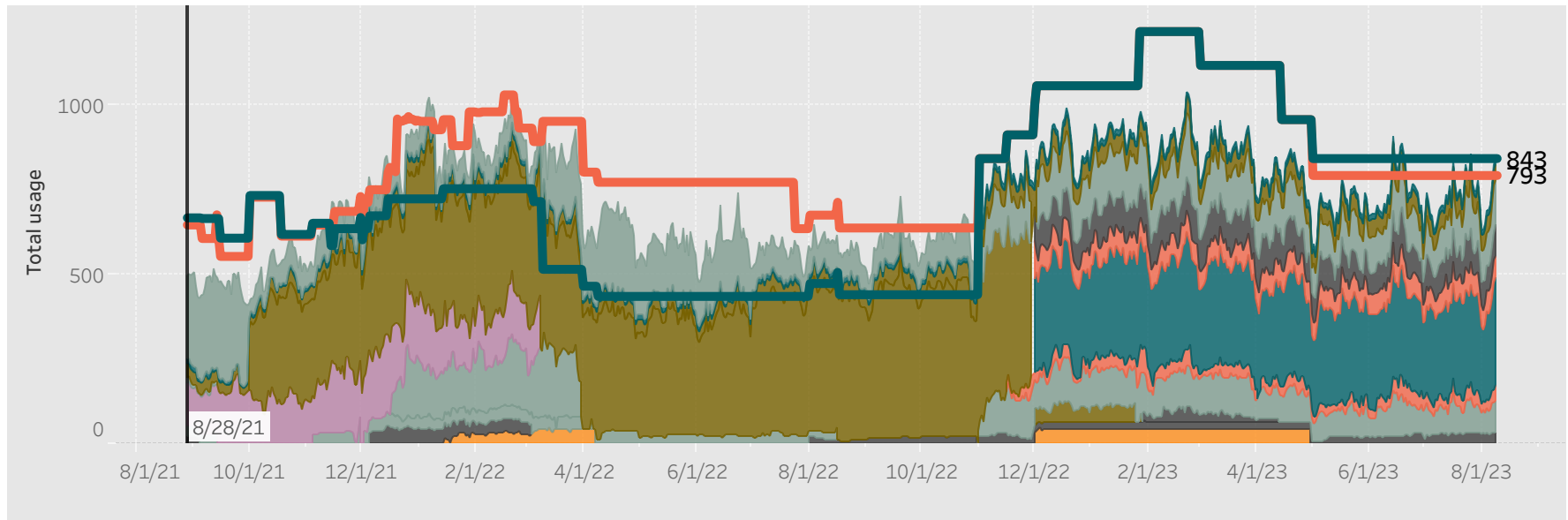
Date

8/28/2021 to 8/10/2023
and Null values

Agency

All


- Operational capacity - number of shelter beds that the shelter provider can provide due to current circumstances
- Contracted capacity - maximum number of shelter beds in each facility as contracted by Alberta Community and Social Services



Site

- | | | |
|--|---|---|
| ■ Hope Mission - Main Building | ■ Hope Mission - Herb Jamieson - Emergency - Limited Mobility - .. | ■ Hope Mission - Warehouse - |
| ■ YESS - Youth Shelter | ■ Hope Mission - Herb Jamieson - Emergency - Male only | ■ Hope Mission - Winter Emer |
| ■ e4c - WEAC | ■ Hope Mission - Herb Jamieson Centre | ■ Mustard Seed - Commonwe |
| ■ Mustard Seed - Moravian Church | ■ Hope Mission - Main Building (Basement) - Emergency Winter | ■ Mustard Seed - Knox Evang |
| ■ Hope Mission - Emergency - Female only | ■ Hope Mission - Main Building Overflow - Emergency Winter | ■ Mustard Seed - Neighbour C |
| ■ Hope Mission - Herb Jamieson - Emergency - Intox- Male only | ■ Hope Mission - Spectrum | ■ Mustard Seed - Strathcona |

This is Exhibit "C" referred to in the Affidavit of
Devyn Ens, sworn this 15th day of September, 2023



CHRISTOPHER WIEBE
LAWYER

HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE STRATEGY - SUPPLEMENTAL SHELTER PLAN 2022 TO 2024

RECOMMENDATION

1. That the October 17, 2022, Community Services report CS01536, be received for information.
2. That Attachment 1 of the October 17, 2022, Community Services report CS01536 remain private pursuant to sections 24 (advice from officials) and 27 (privileged information) of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

Requested Council Action	Information Only		
ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle	ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals		
CONNECTED This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.	Healthy City		
City Plan Values	LIVE		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	Inclusive and compassionate	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	Community safety and well-being
Corporate Business Plan	Transforming for the future		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	A short list of the most relevant items, including but not limited to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C620 - Supporting Vulnerable People During Extreme Weather Conditions 		
Related Council Discussions	A short list of Council discussions and/or short-form pending motions related to the Item (include the meeting type and date): <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CS01278, Homeless and Encampment Response Strategy - Update, Community and Public Services Committee, October 11, 2022 • CE01417, Intergovernmental Update, City Council, Sept 12/Oct 3/Oct 7, 2022 • CS01347, Small scale sanctioned encampments, City Council, July 4, 2022 • CS00796 City of Edmonton Minimum Emergency Shelter Standards, City Council, June 27, 2022 		

HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE STRATEGY - SUPPLEMENTAL SHELTER PLAN 2022 TO 2024

- OCM00991 Community Safety and Well-Being Strategy, Community and Public Services Strategy, May 16, 2022
- CS01225 Homelessness and Encampment Response Strategy, City Council, April 25, 2022
- CS00506 - Emergency Shelter Standards and Operating Requirements, City Council, August 25, 2021

Executive Summary

- Homelessness in Edmonton has increased dramatically over the past two years, due to the COVID-19 pandemic and economic pressures.
- In 2019, City Council approved City Policy C620 - Supporting Vulnerable People During Extreme Weather Conditions, which provides direction for the City to supplement and support the existing homeless-serving system during extreme weather (extreme heat, cold or poor air quality).
- In preparation for the 2022/23 winter season, the Government of Alberta and the City of Edmonton have identified a number of activities to support Edmontonians experiencing homelessness. This report provides an update on those plans.

REPORT

Background

As of October 12, 2022, Homeward Trust's By Name List indicates that more than 2,650 Edmontonians are experiencing homelessness. Of those on the list, over 1,300 people self-identify as primarily sleeping in emergency shelters or outdoors. Existing service providers have been challenged to meet increased demand within current facilities and budgets.

Prior to the pandemic, the City of Edmonton's role in emergency shelter provision was limited to the provision of overflow shelter space during extreme weather periods only. With the onset of the public health emergency caused by COVID-19, the City of Edmonton took on a larger role by working with the Government of Alberta and other partners to ensure the adequate provision of emergency shelter space. Shortly after the public health emergency was declared, the City supported the activation of a day shelter at the EXPO Centre and overnight shelters at Central Lions Seniors Centre and Kinsmen Recreation Centre. For the past two winters (2020/21 and 2021/22), temporary shelters were activated at City-owned facilities, including at the Edmonton Convention Centre, Spectrum building at Exhibition Lands and Commonwealth Stadium. The City of Edmonton has also directly funded and provided in-kind support to emergency shelters and other homeless-serving agencies when necessary to help meet the growing demand for services.

Current State

The lifting of pandemic restrictions in early 2022 meant that there are now 622 permanently funded emergency shelter spaces in Edmonton. Both the Government of Alberta and City Administration have agreed this level of shelter spaces is insufficient for winter 2022/23.

HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE STRATEGY - SUPPLEMENTAL SHELTER PLAN 2022 TO 2024

In response to the need for additional supports and shelter spaces, both the Government of Alberta and the City of Edmonton have been working collaboratively on a plan for winter 2022/23 and winter 2023/24. This partnership has resulted in a number of commitments, described below. Additional considerations for Council are provided in Attachment 1.

Government of Alberta Winter 2022/23 and 2023/24 Response

On October 1, 2022, the Government of Alberta released *Alberta's Homelessness Action Plan*. In addition to commitments towards system modernization and better alignment with the Council-approved Minimum Emergency Shelter Standards, the plan includes five commitments for Edmonton:

1. Creating 450 additional temporary emergency shelter spaces for winter 2022/23 and winter 2023/24.
 - a. This will increase shelter spaces in Edmonton to 1,072 total spaces during the winter months
2. Expanding all provincially funded shelters to 24/7 access.
3. Piloting a service hub model at shelters, focused on recovery, housing and emergency financial support.
4. Equalizing funding between community-based organizations in Edmonton and Calgary.
5. Improving data collection and reporting to support innovation, inform decision-making and better understand homelessness.

City of Edmonton Winter 2022/23 and 2023/24 Response

In anticipation of the increased needs for Edmontonians experiencing homelessness, the City of Edmonton is planning or has underway a number of key activities to provide additional supports this winter. These include, but are not limited to:

Extreme Weather Bus

Administration is currently making preparations to operate an Extreme Weather Bus, which is an overnight transportation service that operates during extreme weather events to transport people from central locations to shelters. This service is provided in partnership with ETS (Charter Bus and Operators) and Community Standards and Neighbourhoods (Transit Peace Officers), with outreach workers from agency partners. Funding for this work is accommodated within the City's existing operating budget.

Boyle Street Community Service's Outreach Bus

Administration will extend funding again to Boyle Street Community Services' Winter Warming Bus from November 1, 2022 to May 31, 2023. This bus operates a regular day-time route that focuses on providing people experiencing homelessness in areas outside the central core, a space to warm up, access to supplies essential for survival (blankets, winter clothing and health supplies) and provide connections to housing and other services. Funding for this work is to be accommodated within the City's existing operating budget.

HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE STRATEGY - SUPPLEMENTAL SHELTER PLAN 2022 TO 2024

Extension of Bissell Day Services Contract

During the October 7, 2022 City Council meeting, Council approved \$2.66 million for the purpose of entering into a subsidy agreement with Bissell Centre for day services in their Community Space until May 31, 2022 (CE01382). The funding enables Bissell Centre to operate seven days per week, ten hours per day. The Community Space functions as a service hub, where participants can access a constellation of supports, including: basic needs (laundry, showers, meals, and community closet, Indigenous Cultural supports, housing supports, and other support services (medical, mental health and addictions, etc).

Provincial Government Funded Shelter Support

The Government of Alberta has communicated to Administration that they will continue to keep the City informed on its winter shelter plan and Administration will continue to support the Government of Alberta on rollout planning, such as support with permitting/zoning and assistance with neighbourhood engagement.

Potential Additional Activities

Administration will work with its partners to continue to monitor shelter capacity and other related impacts throughout the coming months and may propose further strategies for ensuring the safety of vulnerable Edmontonians in response to changing conditions or unforeseen circumstances that may emerge this winter.

Budget/Financial Implications

Funding, as required, to activate the Extreme Weather Bus is through existing funds available within the 2022 Social Development branch operating budget for this activity.

One time funding of \$288,367 to Boyle Street Community Services to operate the Outreach Bus will be accommodated using existing funds within the previously approved Social Development 2022 operating budget.

The Government of Alberta provides operational funding only (see Attachment 1), therefore facility capital and site set-up costs may be required to allow existing operators to expand their facilities.

One time funding of \$2.66 million to Bissell Centre to allow for extended operating hours and day services in their Community Space until May 31, 2023 was previously approved at City Council on October 7, 2022 using COVID-19 funds previously appropriated within the Financial Stabilization Reserve.

COMMUNITY INSIGHT

Administration works with community stakeholders to address shelter and service gaps for individuals experiencing homelessness in preparation for winter. Stakeholders include Homeward Trust and homeless-serving organizations, including shelters, day shelter providers, and those who deliver outreach services. These groups informed the actions and decisions made by

HOMELESSNESS RESPONSE STRATEGY - SUPPLEMENTAL SHELTER PLAN 2022 TO 2024

Administration, which prioritizes City efforts to augment existing services to ensure every vulnerable person has access to a safe space to meet their basic needs.

GBA+

As of October 12, 2022 Homeward Trust's By Name List indicates that there are more than 2,650 people experiencing homelessness in Edmonton. Of those 2,650+ people, over 1,300 are either currently staying in a shelter or sleeping outdoors, with the remainder provisionally accommodated (couch-surfing, short-term housing, etc.). Despite making up only five per cent of Edmonton's overall population, roughly 60 per cent of these Edmontonians are Indigenous. Of the more than 2,650 individuals experiencing homelessness, approximately 45 per cent identify as female.


In addition to the ongoing barriers individuals experiencing homelessness face in accessing public services like transportation, regular and appropriate health care, food, and shelter, the identities of those individuals intersect with other equity-seeking groups. The experience of racialized and two-spirit, lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer/questioning, and plus (2SLGBTQ+) community members experiencing homelessness is uniquely challenging in that they face additional discrimination and lack of appropriate support when trying to access existing shelter, housing and social service systems. People with disabilities and significant health challenges are over-represented among those experiencing homelessness – being homeless also worsens health issues and creates an elevated risk of new health issues and death. Many services available to people experiencing homelessness are not designed to meet the needs of people with significant and complex physical and mental health challenges, including substance use disorders.

As a funder of the homeless-serving sector, the City endeavours to include contractual provisions in its agreements with agencies to best ensure the removal of barriers to access for vulnerable persons experiencing homelessness.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Overview of Winter 2022/23 and Winter 2023/24 Considerations - PRIVATE

**This is Exhibit “ D ” referred to in the Affidavit of
Devyn Ens, sworn this 15th day of September, 2023**


CHRISTOPHER WIEBE
LAWYER



EDMONTON'S APPROACH (2023/24) - SUPPORTING THOSE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

RECOMMENDATION

That the May 1, 2023, Community Services report CS01762, be received for information.

Requested Council Action	Information only		
ConnectEdmonton's Guiding Principle	ConnectEdmonton Strategic Goals		
CONNECTED This unifies our work to achieve our strategic goals.	Healthy City		
City Plan Values	LIVE		
City Plan Big City Move(s)	Inclusive and compassionate	Relationship to Council's Strategic Priorities	Community safety and well-being
Corporate Business Plan	Transforming for the future		
Council Policy, Program or Project Relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • C620 - Supporting Vulnerable People During Extreme Weather Conditions 		
Related Council Discussions	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • CS01637 Enhanced Encampment and Unsheltered Homelessness Response Plan, April 11, 2023, Community and Public Services Committee • CS01536 Homelessness Response Strategy - Supplemental Shelter Plan 2022 - 2024, October 17, 2022, City Council • CS01603 Update on Emergency Shelter Space in Edmonton, November 30, 2022, City Council Budget 		

EDMONTON'S APPROACH (2023/24) - SUPPORTING THOSE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Executive Summary

- City Policy C620 - Supporting Vulnerable People During Extreme Weather Conditions formalizes the City's role in ensuring a systematic response to extreme weather conditions in order to safeguard the health and lives of vulnerable Edmontonians. The City's implementation of this policy has evolved significantly in recent years in response to the marked increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness in Edmonton and in response to direction from City Council.
- Administration has extended the bridge/transitional housing portion of the West End Shelter (former Bedford Inn) operation for up to seven months. The operator is forecasting funding will provide four months of operations (up to September 30, 2023). As the project currently has unspent funds, no further funding is required to do this. The original agreement term was approved by City Council on November 30, 2022 through Community Services report CS01603.
- For Winter 2023/23 Administration plans to implement a base level of supports using its existing budget allocation. However, the results of the 2022/23 winter season have also been used to provide early information about service options for supporting those experiencing homelessness that could be considered during 2023/24 winter season, such as augmenting day shelter spaces and increasing City investment to add additional bridge/transitional housing spaces. Information about day services subsidy agreements that are expiring this Spring has also been included should City Council wish to consider extension of these services. Council may also wish to consider advocacy to the Government of Alberta for investment in additional services prior to committing additional City funds, however unless a firm deadline for confirmation of funding decisions is set the window for implementing new services could close.
- An evaluation of who is best suited to run the ongoing cold weather transportation services will also be undertaken, considering social sector partnerships, City run service and contracted models.
- A broader strategic plan for Edmonton's role in homelessness will be presented during the October 30, 2023 Community and Public Services Committee report CS01853- Updated Community Plan to End Homelessness and the Q1 2024 Community and Public Services Committee report CS01759 - City of Edmonton - Corporate Homelessness Plan.
- Homelessness can only be reduced through affordable housing and adequate health and support services. Investments made in short term solutions may reduce the opportunities for investment in long term solutions, however, it is important to ensure an adequate crisis response exists to meet the needs of people experiencing homelessness.

REPORT

Edmonton is a leader among Canadian cities in its response to homelessness. Since 2008, over 15,500 people have been housed through Housing First programs and overall homelessness fell by 45 per cent between 2008 and 2018. This momentum was significantly impacted by the economic shock and stressors related to the global COVID-19 pandemic as well as the combined impacts of a structural shortage of affordable housing and a significant gap in mental health and

EDMONTON'S APPROACH (2023/24) - SUPPORTING THOSE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

addiction care. Edmonton, like most cities across North America, has experienced a rise in the number of people sleeping outside.

Since 2019, the number of people experiencing homelessness in Edmonton has nearly doubled¹. Homeless-serving agencies have struggled to keep up with the increased demand for more services and the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness has also grown. Between 2016 and 2022, encampment-related requests for service to 311 increased by 1,075 per cent, from 790 inquiries in 2016 to 9,300 in 2022. Part of the growth in unsheltered homelessness can be attributed to the inability of Edmonton's emergency shelter system to adequately meet the needs of those who require their services.

City Policy C620 - Supporting Vulnerable People During Extreme Weather Conditions formalizes the City's role in ensuring a systematic response to extreme weather conditions in order to safeguard the health and lives of Edmontonians who are vulnerable. Administration has a range of supports to address the intent of the policy. These plans are developed in consultation with the Government of Alberta, Homeward Trust, emergency shelters and the homeless-serving sector. In previous years, the City's plans have been finalized following the confirmation of funding and facilities from other partners in the early to late fall. The Government of Alberta's October 1, 2022 announcement of \$5 million per year in winter emergency funding for a period covering two winters (Winter 2022/23 and 2023/24) combined with more recent announcements regarding the expansion of its shelter hub program and 24/7 shelter hours, provides additional clarity and allows for confirmation of City plans this spring.

Attachment 1 provides a summary of activities in place for Winter 2022/23 while Attachment 2 outlines options for supporting vulnerable Edmontonians through to spring of 2024.

Winter 2022/23 Overview

The City's 2022/23 winter response to support Edmontonians experiencing homelessness focused on a number of key activities, noted below, with a total approximate cost of \$14.1 million.

Emergency Shelter

According to Homeward Trust's By Name List, over the winter of 2022/23, between 2,650 and 2,800 Edmontonians were experiencing homelessness at any one time. Of those on the list, between 1,250 and 1,350 people self-identified as primarily sleeping in emergency shelters or outdoors.²

Over the course of the winter approximately 1,202 emergency shelter spaces were made available by the Government of Alberta, including 627 permanent and 575 temporary emergency shelter spaces. In addition to the 1,202 Government of Alberta funded shelter spaces, the Al Rashid Mosque provided up to 75 shelter spaces during extreme weather activations and the West End Shelter (former Bedford Inn), funded by the City, provided up to 150 shelter spaces.

¹ "Data, Analytics & Reporting". <https://homewardtrust.ca/data-analytics-reporting/>. Homeward Trust. Cited April 6, 2023.

² "Data, Analytics & Reporting". <https://homewardtrust.ca/data-analytics-reporting/>. Homeward Trust. Cited April 6, 2023.

EDMONTON'S APPROACH (2023/24) - SUPPORTING THOSE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

The Government of Alberta funded shelters were routinely at over 70 per cent capacity during non-extreme weather times and over 75 per cent capacity during extreme weather events. While the shelter system never exceeded capacity during winter 2022/23, large numbers of vulnerable Edmontonians were still found to be sheltering in transit facilities. Between January 1 and February 28, 2023, an average of 225 individuals were removed from ETS facilities during nightly lock-up procedures, with an average of 106 individuals refusing transportation to shelter on the shuttle bus per night, when offered during weather-related responses.

Extreme Weather Activations

The City of Edmonton operated an augmented version of its extreme weather response, which was designed to respond to the incidences of people sheltering in transit facilities and ensure all people experiencing homelessness had safe and consistent access to emergency shelter spaces. These activities included:

- ETS Extreme Weather Buses - two buses that operated as shuttles on designated routes to transport vulnerable Edmontonians to shelters. These routes were activated overnight when the weather fell below -20°C including windchill for a period of at least 72 hours.
- The Boyle Street Warming Bus - provided basic necessities and services and transport to shelters and operated every day regardless of weather conditions.
- Shelter Spaces - supported up to 75 shelter spaces at Al Rashid Mosque.
- Encampment Response - encampment response teams conducted wellness checks and only addressed high-risk encampments.
- City Facilities - City of Edmonton recreation facilities and Edmonton Public Library locations were open for warming purposes during regular hours of operation.

Connecting People Experiencing Homelessness in ETS Facilities to Supports

In the 2022/23 winter season, Administration also enacted an additional response outside of extreme weather activations that included:

- Winter response - one bus operated on call to respond to needs identified by transit peace officers or through monitoring ETS security cameras when the weather fell between -10°C and -20°C .
- Daily well being checks of Edmontonians experiencing homelessness in ETS facilities, including access to crisis diversion, well being and medical aid, Community Outreach Transit Team resources and referrals to social services.
- ETS station nightly lock up support - ensuring those who may not have the capacity to look after their own well being were connected with crisis diversion, Emergency Medical Services or any other available form of transportation when ETS stations are locked nightly.

West End Shelter (former Bedford Inn)

The City provided \$7.5 million from the Financial Stabilization Reserve in funding for a proposal from Jasper Place Wellness Centre, who collaborated with Tallcree Tribal Government (legal entity

EDMONTON'S APPROACH (2023/24) - SUPPORTING THOSE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

- Tipeemso Development Limited Partnership), for 150 congregate shelter spaces and 59 units of single-occupancy transition housing. The site provided 24/7 staffing and security, meals, overdose response, and housing supports. Bridge/transitional housing spaces have been well used, with full occupancy since the beginning of March. Shelter space occupancy has varied, but over time has reached up to 80 to 85 per cent capacity, even during non-extreme weather periods.

Day Services

During Winter 2022/23, Edmonton had 280 day shelter spaces, 627 permanently funded 24/7 shelter spaces, and 90 temporarily funded 24/7 shelter spaces, for a total of 997 24/7 spaces.

During a four month period this winter, there were 33,473 visits made by vulnerable people to the Boyle Street Community Services (The Boyle Street Service Society) for an average of 279 per day. Administration is funding Boyle Street Community Services (The Boyle Street Service Society) and Bissell Centre, as highlighted below, to augment their day shelter operational hours and programming. These agreements expire shortly.

For 2022/23, the City provided funding towards a number of services and supports to those experiencing homelessness that will be expiring in Spring 2023. These agreements include:

- **Day Shelter Services Spaces** - Ongoing needs exist in day shelter services.
 - Boyle Street Community Services (The Boyle Street Service Society) was allocated \$750,000 in funding from the City to support the provision of expanded day service capacity and programming at its day service operation for the winter months, as well as temporary operation of a mobile shower trailer in an adjoining courtyard area, until April 30, 2023, with funding through existing budget.
 - Bissell Centre was allocated \$2,660,000 in funding from the City to provide day services for extended hours, 10 hours per day, seven days per week, until May 31, 2023, with funding through the COVID-19 funds appropriated within the Financial Stabilization Reserve.

Sufficient day services for people who are experiencing homelessness has been identified as a gap in the homeless-serving system of care that will be further widened when both of these agreements expire. The absence of these agreements will leave a critical gap in supports and services for people experiencing homelessness. While the recommendation for this report focuses on extending the subsidy funding agreement with Jasper Place Wellness Centre for extended provision of bridge/transitional housing, there is no funding source available for the day services agreement renewals.

Boyle Street Community Services (The Boyle Street Service Society) has existing funding in place to operate their day services eight hours per day, five days a week. Boyle Street Community Services (The Boyle Street Service Society) has requested City funding for expanded hours for winter 2023/24. Bissell Centre is also seeking additional City funding to continue its operations as a service hub year round and would only be able to continue operating three hours per day, five days per week with minimal support services unless alternate funding is secured.

West End Shelter (former Bedford Inn)

EDMONTON'S APPROACH (2023/24) - SUPPORTING THOSE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

Funding for the bridge/transitional housing and congregate shelter spaces has been extended from an original expiry date of May 31, 2023 to December 31, 2023.

- Jasper Place Wellness Centre will continue the bridge/transitional housing spaces for an extended time period but not the congregate shelter spaces. Administration will support Jasper Place Wellness Centre on a transition plan for current occupants when the site closes.
- At the time of the writing of this report, unspent funds from the initial agreement and originally approved funding of \$7.5 million are estimated to be up to \$1.9 million by the end of May 31, 2023.
- Jasper Place Wellness Centre is forecasting funding will provide four months of operations (until September 30, 2023), however, they may be able to operate longer, potentially to the end of 2023. The agreement extension allows the bridge/transitional housing spaces to operate up to December 31, 2023 should funds remain.

Options for Supporting Those Experiencing Homelessness (Winter 2023/2024)

Administration has identified several options for supporting those experiencing homelessness, including a base set of activities for summer 2023 and winter 2023/24, with optional activities that would augment day shelter supports or increase City investment in bridge housing. Attachment 2 provides detailed information on these options.

Base Level of Supports Using Current Budget Allocation

This level of service would include the continuation of some winter 2022/23 support activities, namely the extreme weather activations, base support for people experiencing homelessness in ETS facilities and support for Government of Alberta funded shelters with transportation, permitting assistance, etc. An evaluation of who is best suited to run the transportation service will be undertaken, considering social sector partnerships, City run service and contracted models. This level of support does not include additional activities such as Administration's shigella response, day shelter funding, or overtime funding for transit operators and transit Peace Officers.

This base level of support would have access to a base budget funding of \$1 million for extreme weather response and \$0.25 million in available one-time operational funding (carry-forward of 2022 unspent funds) for a total of \$1.25 million for winter 2023/24.

Potential Supplemental Activities

If City Council is interested in pursuing any of the following supplemental options, Administration will need clear direction now so that the appropriate planning can take place over the summer and fall months. This would include determining the appropriate costs for the options and the required funding sources that would need to be approved prior to winter 2023/2024. Administration will return to the Fall SOBA budget discussions with more detailed plans for activation and required funding. Any, or all, of the following additional activities could supplement the base level of support to vulnerable Edmontonians with additional City funding.

EDMONTON'S APPROACH (2023/24) - SUPPORTING THOSE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

The costs are based on estimates and are subject to change. Funding requirements will be refined for future budget decisions as necessary.

- Day shelter supports - \$3.79 million (Bissell Centre - June 2023 to April 2024; Boyle Street November 2023 to April 2024), to support extended hours of operations.
- Bridge housing - \$11 to \$13 million (per year)
 - Administration will continue to work closely with the Government of Alberta to determine any additional funding opportunities that may exist for winter 2023/2024 that could be applied towards day services or bridge housing spaces, beyond the 24/7 spaces funding that has been included in current shelters and any funding that may have been provided to Homeward Trust for bridge housing. The window of opportunity to seize potential funding opportunities for additional day service and bridge housing spaces will be small, acknowledging that the May provincial election will likely delay planning conversations with the Government of Alberta.
 - Administration will also work with Homeward Trust to identify additional 200 shelter and housing spaces, such as continuous stay shelter or bridge housing. Homeward Trust operated bridge housing sites in Edmonton had an average length of stay in 2022 of 105 days. As a caveat, unique circumstances at some of the sites, may have had an impact on the length of stay of some of these participants.
- Supplemental transportation services, such as transportation to shelters, increased shuttle buses, additional Transit Peace Officer staff to support operations and transit centre lock-ups for people experiencing homelessness in ETS facilities.
 - Costs to be identified once evaluation and planning work complete.

Of the supplemental activities, congregate shelter spaces have not been included for future City investment. Instead, Administration has focused on targeted interventions that may enable the system to better meet the needs of people whose needs are not well met by existing services (e.g. bridge housing geared to women).

Budget/Financial Implications

On November 30, 2022, City Council - budget approved one-time funding of \$7.5 million from the Financial Stabilization Reserve, to be spent on a multi-year basis (2022 and 2023), in relation to bridge/transition housing and shelter spaces at the West End Shelter (the former Bedford Inn) for up to a six month period of operations (December 1, 2022 to May 31, 2023). This agreement has since been extended to December 31, 2023. The subsidy funding agreement was signed in December 2022, but as funds were unable to be released until 2023, the full \$7.5 million was requested for carry forward from 2022 to 2023 which Council approved on March 14, 2022.

Jasper Place Wellness Centre is currently estimating that up to \$1.9 million of the originally approved \$7.5 million will remain unspent at the end of the original six month period of operations, on May 31, 2023. The \$1.9 million is already committed by way of an executed subsidy agreement with Jasper Place Wellness Centre, and would be available to fund the extension of the subsidy funding agreement with Jasper Place Wellness Centre for the continued provision of bridge/transition housing up to December 31, 2023. The available funding is forecast to support the bridge housing until September 30, 2023. In the event that funding is able to

EDMONTON'S APPROACH (2023/24) - SUPPORTING THOSE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

support operations for a longer period of time, and to avoid returning for another extension, Administration has extended the funding of project operations up to a maximum time period to December 31, 2023. This will create flexibility in the agreement to best align the continued support of project operations with the exact end date to match the exhaustion of the remaining funds originally awarded on the contract.

Currently, there is \$1.25 million of funding available for the 2023/24 winter response including a mixture of dedicated ongoing funding for Extreme Weather Response (\$1.0 million) and one-time carryforward of funding from 2022 (\$0.25 million). The funds will be used for extreme and cold weather activations, support for GoA-funded shelters, and an evaluation of transportation service as further detailed in Attachment 2.

The estimated costs for unfunded additional potential supplemental activities are discussed in the report and further explained in Attachment 2. Potential funding sources for an enhanced Winter 2023/24 response include Community Safety Well-being funds held within Financial Strategies or new funding requests through the 2023 Fall Supplemental Operating Budget Adjustment process, which may include reallocation of tax-levy to unfunded priorities through the OP12 work currently underway. The funding could be provided on an ongoing basis, or one-time basis, or a combination, depending on the City's financial capacity.

COMMUNITY INSIGHT

Administration works with community stakeholders to address shelter and service gaps for individuals experiencing homelessness in preparation for winter. Stakeholders include Homeward Trust and homeless-serving organizations, including shelters, day shelter providers and those who deliver outreach services. These perspectives informed the actions and decisions made by Administration, to ensure every vulnerable person has access to a safe space to meet their basic needs.

GBA+

Every person experiencing homelessness is unique. There is no one way into homelessness and there is no one way out. The overall population is incredibly diverse in terms of age, gender, ethno-racial background and educational attainment. However, of those individuals currently experiencing homelessness, 58 per cent³ identify as indigenous.

Administration is committed to increasing indigenous representation in the services provided by the City. To this end, the City funded Jasper Place Wellness Centre in respect of the bridge/transitional housing and shelter spaces, which involves a collaboration with Tipeemso Development Limited Partnership. The City is also exploring an indigenous led shelter and just launched an Indigenous Housing Grant program.

In Edmonton, the number of people experiencing homelessness has dramatically increased over the last couple of years, nearly doubling from 2019 to 2022.⁴ When it comes to public safety,

³ "Data, Analytics & Reporting". <https://homewardtrust.ca/data-analytics-reporting/>. Homeward Trust. Cited April 6, 2023.

⁴ "Data, Analytics & Reporting". <https://homewardtrust.ca/data-analytics-reporting/>. Homeward Trust. Cited April 6, 2023.

EDMONTON'S APPROACH (2023/24) - SUPPORTING THOSE EXPERIENCING HOMELESSNESS

people experiencing homelessness are generally at an increased risk for victimization from both within the community and outside of it.

Historically, 2SLGBTQ+ Canadians, as well as other at-risk groups, including youth, seniors, Indigenous People, newcomers, and/or people with mental health or addiction issues have accounted for a large percentage of Canadians who are homeless, at risk of being homeless, or in core housing need.⁵In Edmonton, consistent with national research, Indigenous adults and youth experience a higher rate of unsheltered homelessness, compared to non-Indigenous adults and youth. Indigenous women experiencing homelessness face significant risks of both physical violence and sexual assault⁶.

People living in encampments have relatively high rates of complex health needs but face barriers in accessing timely, consistent and appropriate health care. While there is limited local data on the mortality rate from homelessness, research shows that people experiencing homelessness are at increased risk of opioid poisoning and contracting communicable diseases such as COVID-19 and most recently, Shigella.

In the colder months of the year, people experiencing unsheltered homelessness are at increased risk of fire injury or death.

ATTACHMENTS

1. Overview of Winter 2022/23 Supports for Edmontonians Experiencing Homelessness
2. Overview of Options

⁵ "2SLGBTQIA+ Housing Needs and Challenges."

<https://www.cmhc-schl.gc.ca/en/blog/2022/2slgbtqia-housing-needs-challenges>. Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation. Cited March 7, 2023.

⁶ Heidinger, Loanna. *Violent victimization and perceptions of safety: Experiences of First Nations, Metis, and Inuit women in Canada*. Statistics Canada. April 26, 2022.

Overview of Winter 2022/23 Supports for Edmontonians Experiencing Homelessness

During winter 2022/23, Administration’s support for Edmontonians experiencing homelessness focused on five key areas:

1. Extreme and cold weather activations;
2. Connecting people experiencing homelessness in ETS facilities to supports;
3. Permitting and logistical support for Government of Alberta (GoA) funded shelters;
4. Funding the West End Shelter and Bridge Housing site, operated by Jasper Place Wellness Centre in collaboration with Tipeemso Development Limited Partnership; and
5. Other sector supports (e.g. day shelter operations, Shigella response, etc.)

Summary of Winter 2022/23 Expenses (\$000)	
Extreme and cold weather activations	\$1,108
Supports for people experiencing homelessness in ETS facilities	\$290
Support for Government of Alberta funded shelters	\$69
Funding the West End Shelter and Bridge Housing Site	\$7,500
Other sector supports	\$5,154
Total	\$14,121

1) Extreme Weather Activations

To date, there have been 45 days of extreme weather activations this winter season. The City of Edmonton’s Extreme Weather Response encompasses a number of activities:

ETS Extreme Weather Bus

- Operates bus routes between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. to help transport people to shelter. Buses are staffed with two Transit Peace Officers and outreach workers (when the capacity of agency partners allows).
- Staff shortages among agency partners, ETS and TPOs to support the transportation of people from transit facilities to shelters was a significant operational concern during the past winter which requires reevaluating the operating model. For example, out of 117 requested shifts for

Attachment 1

outreach workers on the extreme weather buses, 23 were filled. Of those 23 filled shifts, 12 were filled by external partners. There are a number of potential factors impacting the limited uptake of outreach shifts, including:

- sector-wide human resource challenges for social service providers,
- the difficult nature of these shifts, such as being in addition to full-time regular hours for many staff,
- working overnight and on short notice, and during extremely cold conditions.
- Administration is exploring opportunities to use existing Extreme Weather Response funding to help agency partners build staffing capacity for next winter.

Boyle Street Warming Bus

- With funding support from the City, Boyle Street Community Services (The Boyle Street Service Society) operates a bus from 1 p.m. to 11 p.m., seven days a week. This support provided basic necessities, services, and transport to shelters, if requested.
- The bus is staffed by two support workers, accommodates 30 passengers, visits regular locations known to have large congregations of people experiencing homelessness and integrates with the City's weather-related activities as much as possible.
- From December 2022 until the end of February 2023, the team interacted with clients on 2,803 occasions and transported 214 individuals to drop-ins and shelters.

Al Rashid Mosque

- Funding to support 50 to 75 temporary, overnight shelter spaces at Al Rashid Mosque.
 - This funding included support for: support staff, the provision of essential supplies (e.g. food, bus tickets), private bus transportation at the close of the location each morning, security services, janitorial staff and supplies, and shelter volunteer/staff training
- The City provided permitting and logistical support to assist operations.
- Al Rashid Mosque reached 100 per cent capacity the majority of nights it was activated.

Attachment 1

- Informal feedback received from Al Rashid staff indicates that clients prefer the smaller shelter site and overall approach to shelter provision offered by Al Rashid, over the more centralized and larger shelter sites.

Encampment Response

- Encampment Response teams conduct wellness checks and only address high-risk encampments.

City of Edmonton Facilities

- All City of Edmonton recreation facilities and Edmonton Public Library locations are open to the public for warming purposes during hours of operation.

2) Connecting People Experiencing Homelessness in ETS Facilities to Supports

Through extensive City of Edmonton coordination with both internal and external partners, such as shelter agencies, the Government of Alberta, and others, Administration supported people in ETS facilities by offering transportation to shelter facilities.

Transit Peace Officers (TPOs) check on the well-being of Edmontonians experiencing homelessness in ETS facilities on a daily basis. TPOs ensure vulnerable Edmontonians have access to crisis diversion, arrange transportation to shelters, well-being, and medical aid, offer referrals to the Community Outreach Transit Teams, and social services.

Multiple ETS facilities are locked nightly, requiring everyone to leave the facility at the end of service. TPOs ensure those who may not have the capacity to look after their own well-being are connected with crisis diversion, Emergency Medical Services or any other available form of transportation.

In the 2022/23 winter season, the City s took a two-staged approach to extreme weather and protecting the City's vulnerable community in transit facilities.

- *The Winter Response* was activated when the weather fell between -10°C and -20°C . One ETS shuttle bus operated on call from 11 p.m. to 6 a.m. and was a transportation resource to be utilized by ETS and the TPOs. Two TPOs and an ETS Bus Operator were assigned each night, which were increased overtime for transit operators and TPOs.
- *The Extreme Weather Response* was activated when the weather fell below -20°C including windchill for a period of 72 hours or longer. Two ETS buses operated as warming buses and shuttles on designated routes to

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transport vulnerable Edmontonians from 10 p.m. to 6 a.m. including supporting the TPOs during station lock-up.

For the 2022/23 season, Transit Peace Officers allocated \$290,000 in overtime costs to support nightly lock-ups, the Winter Response, and Extreme Weather Activations.

Between January 1 and February 28, 2023, an average of 225 individuals were removed from ETS facilities every night during lock-up procedures. January 2023 marked the first complete month of data collection in a new format. December 2022 did not have a complete month of data collection and lock-up procedures were not able to be completed on all nights due to staffing limitations and weather conditions. On evenings during which lock-up procedures were not completed due to these limitations, City facilities which are otherwise secured for the purposes of security and after-hours maintenance remained unlocked and insecure.

- Nightly removals ranged between a low of 143 individuals at -9°C and a peak of 390 individuals at -8°C. No direct link was found between the highest removal numbers and the coldest temperature.

There were 69 weather-related responses (Winter Response or Extreme Weather Activation) documented between December 8, 2022 and February 28, 2023. One shelter shuttle bus operated when temperatures were between -10°C and -20°C and two buses operated at -20°C and below.

- 89 individuals were transported to shelters on average, per night during weather-related responses.
- 106 individuals refused transportation to shelter on the shuttle bus per night, on average, when offered during weather-related responses.
- Two Transit Peace Officers per bus, per night of activation, supported the responses, resulting in approximately 1,396 hours of overtime
 - On 15 nights in December, three nights in January and six nights in February there were not enough TPO staff to fully staff the shelter shuttle using overtime resources. In those cases, regular duty Transit Peace Officers were reassigned, creating deficits to regular service which included the inability to complete the station lock-up process and respond to complaint calls made to the Transit Safety Dispatch.
 - TPOs were asked to sign up for over 12,000 hours of overtime in 2022, much of which supported winter support and overnight lock-up processes, which subsequently

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increased sick time for TPOs by 72 per cent compared to the prior year.

- Given this trend, TPO shift schedules for winter 2023/24 will be adapted to mitigate some of the need for nightly overtime shifts, which may impact daytime service levels.

Anecdotal information is available regarding non-destination riders on ETS buses at the end of service and individuals who do not wish to attend shelters.

- The majority of individuals choose other options over shelters due to perceived and real safety concerns. Many will stay awake overnight and sleep during the day in public spaces.

Five of the planned seven Community Outreach Transit Teams are active, providing coverage from 6 a.m. to 2 a.m. across various shifts. These teams have supported individuals by connecting them with resources, providing them with food and supplies, offering first aid care and providing transportation options in support of improving their situation. The remaining two teams are anticipated to be active in Q2 2023.

3) GoA Funded Shelters

On October 1, 2022, the Government of Alberta (GoA) released *Alberta's Homelessness Action Plan*. In addition to commitments towards system modernization, the plan includes five commitments for Edmonton:

1. Creating 450 additional temporary emergency shelter spaces for winter 2022/23 and winter 2023/24, increasing shelter spaces in Edmonton to 1,072 total spaces during the winter months
2. Expanding all provincially funded shelters to 24/7 access.
3. Piloting a service hub model at shelters, focused on recovery, housing and emergency financial support.
4. Equalizing funding between community-based organizations in Edmonton and Calgary.
5. Improving data collection and reporting to support innovation, inform decision-making and better understand homelessness.

The GoA funded 627 permanent and 575 temporary emergency shelter spaces for winter 2022/23, exceeding the 450 spaces to which it committed. This resulted in a total of 1,202 emergency shelter spaces for Edmonton in winter 2022/23. This funding will continue for winter 2023/24.

These 575 temporary emergency shelter spaces were funded at:

- Trinity Lutheran Church - 45 spaces

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- Hope Mission South Side Warehouse - 160 spaces
- Hope Mission Main Building (Basement and overflow areas) - 300 spaces
- Hope Mission Herb Jamieson (additional spaces) - 70 spaces

GoA funded shelters were routinely above 75 per cent capacity during extreme weather events and saw a peak shelter usage in February of 1,028 spaces being used at one time. Additionally, discussions with the GoA highlighted that women's shelter spaces routinely were near or at full capacity all winter and that intoxication spaces were also routinely near full capacity. Smaller scale shelter options, such as Al Rashid or The Mustard Seed Trinity Lutheran Church were also generally at capacity during extreme weather events.

City Administration supported the funded agencies with permitting activities and expedited all aspects of the permitting process, such as permit submission reviews and inspections. This extensive support also included:

- pre-application meetings and site checks;
- advice and feedback on draft permit applications;
- expedited review of applications; and
- prioritized inspection dates.

Support was provided to Hope Mission South Side Shelter and The Mustard Seed Trinity Lutheran Church.

Through the GoA Service Hub Model, funding has been provided to Hope Mission shelter to allow for increased prevention and diversion work. Diversion work helps to quickly connect individuals to more stable housing. Key elements of this model include:

- Increasing the number of housing workers in shelters, providing Alberta Support workers (Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) and income support), and increasing Indigenous cultural support.
- Allowing for better connections with emergency rooms and hospitals, allowing medical staff in shelters to provide better care.
- Improved and coordinated releases as a result of Correction and Community Probations involvement.

Some early successes include Hope Mission housing close to 50 individuals in the month of February. This has steadily increased since the beginning of the pilot, as historically there have been only a handful of individuals housed per month.

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A third-party evaluator has been hired to review this pilot's system-wide impact, specifically on hospitals and the justice system. These findings are expected to impact possible provincial spread of this approach.

4) City-Funded Shelter

On November 23, 2022, Administration brought forward CS01603 - Update on Emergency Shelter Situation in Edmonton, to Executive Committee. Subsequently, on November 30, 2022, City Council approved \$7.5 million in funding to Jasper Place Wellness Centre (JPWC), in relation to bridge / transition housing and shelter spaces at the former Bedford Inn, located at 15540 Stony Plain Road NW, Edmonton, Alberta.

In respect of this project, 58 transition/bridge housing beds opened on January 20, 2023, and the emergency shelter spaces opened on February 17, 2023, with a phased launch of the spaces. There are 150 shelter spaces, 11 of which are low mobility spaces, with full beds for clients and access to accessible bathrooms.

Bridge/transitional housing spaces have been well used, with full occupancy since the beginning of March and around three individuals being connected from the bridge/transitional housing spaces into permanent housing solutions per week.

The shelter space occupancy has varied, but over time has reached 80-90 per cent capacity, even during non-extreme weather periods. Operators report that some guests are better served by the location and prefer its smaller size. Others who primarily access services in the city centre have been reluctant to travel to the west end. However, the site is easily accessed by transit, being close to the Jasper Place Transit Centre and the site is on the Extreme Weather bus route.

The agreement has been extended from its original expiration of May 31, 2023 to December 31, 2023. This means that the site will operate until the City's funding support for project operations ends. At this time, JPWC is forecasting up to \$1.9 million in unspent funding by May 31, 2023. This is due, in part, to the delay in opening the site and lower than anticipated operational costs. The unspent funds will provide the potential for an extension of the agreement related to the bridge/transitional housing spaces, up to December 31, 2023, although the operator is forecasting funding will provide four months of operations until September 30, 2023.

5) Other Sector Supports

The City of Edmonton provided funding and supports to the larger sector on a number of projects and initiatives, which support vulnerable Edmontonians:

Shigella Response:

- In October 2022, Alberta Health Services (AHS) requested that the City continue its summer washroom program into the winter months, while also supplying and maintaining additional accessible washrooms and showers.
- The City provided five temporary washroom facilities and one “hygiene hub”, a site that included washroom, laundry, and shower trailers (with the laundry trailer being provided through a private donation). These sites had a cost of \$215,000 per month.
- These sites are staffed with attendants from Hiregood who are trained in overdose response and also offer water, clean clothing, and peer support.
- On February 16, 2023, AHS declared the shigella outbreak over but the outbreak was reopened on March 10, 2023. The City of Edmonton will continue to fund the washroom and shower sites until April 30, 2024; under the direction of AHS.
- The washrooms were frequently accessed. As of March 19, 2023, 189 daily visits were made to the six washrooms funded as part of the shigella response. An additional 12 people per day make use of the two shower facilities.

Day Shelter Services

- Day services for people who are experiencing homelessness have been identified as a gap in the homeless-serving system of care. Day shelters ensure that individuals have somewhere to go for essential services (showers, laundry, clothing, meals) and connections to housing and support services during the day.
- Not all emergency shelters in Edmonton operate 24/7 and the level of services available during the day varies. The shelter sites that do not have 24/7 hours are the South Side Shelter operated by Hope Mission and the Trinity Lutheran Church shelter, operated by the Mustard Seed.
- Since May 2021, the City has funded additional day shelter space as a response to the ongoing impacts of COVID-19.
- Over Winter 2022/23, Edmonton had 280 day shelter spaces, 627 permanently funded 24/7 shelter spaces, and 90 temporarily funded 24/7 shelter spaces, for a total of 997 24/7 spaces.
- Between November 1, 2022 and February 28, 2023, there was a monthly average of 8,368 visits made by 1,771 unique individuals to Boyle Street Community Services (The Boyle Street Service Society). In addition, the agency Housing Intake & Referral Coordinator had on average 475

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interactions with 304 existing and potential housing participants per month within the same timeframe.

- Currently, Administration is funding Boyle Street Community Services (The Boyle Street Service Society) (\$750,000) and Bissell Centre (\$2,660,000) to augment their day shelter operational hours and programming.
 - Day service funding agreements are in place to support operations until April 30, 2023 and May 31, 2023, respectively.
 - The Boyle Street Community Services (The Boyle Street Service Society) funding was sourced from surplus funds from the 2022 Social Development Branch operating budget and the Bissell Centre funding was sourced from the COVID-19 funds appropriated within the Financial Stabilization Reserve.
 - In lieu of funding day services, the GoA has converted all permanently funded overnight shelters to operate 24/7 to ensure that individuals are not required to leave the shelter during the day.
 - Permanently funded overnight shelters include:
 - Hope Mission: Downtown - 125 spaces
 - Hope Mission: Herb Jamieson Centre - 400 spaces
 - E4C: WEAC - 57 spaces
 - Mustard Seed: Neighbour Centre - 45 spaces

Overview of Options

Administration has identified a base set of activities for summer 2023 and winter 2023/24, along with some optional supplemental activities. While reviewing these options, it is important to consider:

- The increase in homelessness and encampments is largely the result of a shortage of safe, adequate and affordable housing and barriers to timely access to health care services, mental health and addiction support and income support.
- Edmonton's current shelter system is not meeting the needs of many individuals experiencing homelessness, with people sleeping outside or in places unsuitable for habitation, such as transit facilities. Edmonton has approximately 629 permanent emergency shelter spaces and approximately 1,360 individuals who identify as most frequently sleeping in shelter or outdoors on Homeward Trust's By Name List¹. This past winter, temporary measures increased the number of shelter spaces available by 575 for a total of 1,202 beds. However, Edmonton still experienced a large number of people sleeping outdoors this winter or seeking shelter from the elements in transit facilities.
- There is insufficient data available to fully understand all the reasons why some individuals are not willing to use available shelter spaces. However, Administration has previously presented evidence highlighting some of the challenges with Edmonton's shelter system (CS00796 June 27, 2022 Community and Public Services Committee report CS00796). Engagement with people with lived and living experience indicate that there are a number of barriers to accessing existing shelters. These concerns include fear of violence and for personal safety, concerns about cleanliness, theft and lack of storage for personal belongings, poor sleep hygiene in crowded shelter environments, lack of Indigenous cultural awareness and programming and lack of spaces for couples and pets. These barriers may be more acutely felt in large-scale shelters.
- The need for shelter spaces to better meet the needs of those using them were recognized when City Council endorsed the City of Edmonton Minimum Emergency Shelter Standards (CS00796, June 27, 2022, CPSC).
- The only permanent solution to homelessness is to ensure people have access to safe, affordable and appropriate housing combined with the health supports they need. While more permanent shelter beds are

¹ <https://homewardtrust.ca/data-analytics-reporting/>

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needed, Edmonton will continue to experience unsheltered homelessness so long as there is a gap in housing and health support services.

- Staff shortages among agency partners, ETS and TPOs to support the transportation of people from transit facilities to shelters was a significant operational concern during the past winter which requires reevaluating the operating model. Consistency in evening shifts may create a more sustainable and desirable shift structure for agency staff and increase the uptake. Continuing the same level of transportation support is also operationally challenging for the City, given the staffing requirement to provide continuous transit vehicles and operators and transit peace officer support. An evaluation of who is best suited to run the transportation service will be undertaken, considering social sector partnerships, city run service and contracted models. More transportation service consistently throughout the winter likely requires significant peace officer support. Opportunities for enhanced support by TPOs to support lock-up activities will be considered.

Administration will continue to work closely with the Government of Alberta to determine any additional funding opportunities that may exist for winter 2023/2024 that could be applied towards day services or bridge housing spaces, beyond the 24/7 spaces funding that has been included in current shelters and any funding that may have been provided to Homeward Trust for bridge housing. Council direction and funding is required for any options over Base Support levels.

Option: Base Support	
Short Description	Funding Available
Continuation of core winter 2022/23 support activities: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extreme and cold weather activations • Support for Government of Alberta (GoA) funded shelters • An evaluation of who is best suited to run the transportation service will be undertaken, considering social sector partnerships, City run service and contracted models 	Within current budget (\$1.25M): \$1.0 million ongoing CSWB \$0.25 million one-time carryforward from 2022 Additional funding requirements will be identified at a future date
<i>Base Supports - Options Analysis</i>	

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Detailed Description	Considerations
<p>Activities would focus on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Extreme and cold weather activations <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Transportation during Extreme Weather and cold weather activations ○ Warming Bus ○ Funding shelter spaces at Al Rashid Mosque including support for: support staff, essential supplies (e.g. food, bus tickets), private bus transportation each morning, security, janitorial staff and supplies, and shelter volunteer/staff training ○ Encampment response teams to conduct wellness checks and only address high-risk encampments ○ City recreation facilities and Edmonton Public Library locations open for warming purposes ● Support for GoA funded shelters <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Logistical support around permitting, etc. ● Other supports <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Ongoing shigella response ● An evaluation of the transportation support services including TPO/ETS resourcing. <p>These activities are in addition to the Government of Alberta commitments around 627 permanent and 575 temporary emergency shelter spaces, for a total of 1,202 spaces, similar to the winter 2022/23 response.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● A summer 2023 and winter 2023/24 response would be less comprehensive than winter 2022/23. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ In 2022/23, Administration had access to surplus funds and other reserves, which are unavailable for winter 2023/24. ● A lack of day shelter funding will result in a reduction in access to services and lessen available spaces for individuals to go during the day, which could result in those individuals using public spaces. ● TPOs will be required to rely on overtime costs to operationally staff winter services and lock ups. This has a high risk of employee fatigue, burn out and injuries, with TPO sick time increasing by 72 per cent between 2021 and 2022. ● In 2022/23, the TPO night shift has been augmented nightly, even when there is no weather response, due to the demand on TPOs with people seeking shelter at the time of station lock up. TPO shift schedules for winter 2023/24 will be adapted to mitigate some of the need for nightly overtime shifts, but this may cause some impacts to daytime service levels. ● A review of the operational model of the transportation provided during extreme weather and cold weather activation is required.

Option: Day Shelter Supports (Unfunded)	
Short Description	Estimated Cost
Augmenting day shelter spaces, assisting the sector to maintain the extended hours and days of operation.	\$3.79 million Bissell Centre: June 1, 2023 to April 30, 2024

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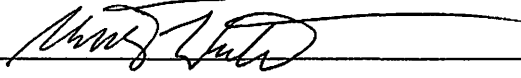
		Boyle Street: November 1, 2023 to April 30, 2024
<i>Day Shelter Supports - Options Analysis</i>		
Detailed Description	Considerations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Funding to Bissell Centre (June 1, 2023 - April 30, 2024) would augment their operational hours • Funding Boyle Street Community Services (The Boyle Street Service Society) (November 1, 2023 - April 30, 2024) to augment operational hours • Over winter 2022/23, Edmonton had 280 day shelter spaces, 627 24/7 shelter spaces, and 90 temporarily funded 24/7 shelter spaces, for a total of 997 spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A lack of funding will result in service access reductions and lessen available spaces for individuals to go during the day. • Bissell Centre’s day shelter serves on average 1,760 unique individuals per month. Housing navigators engage at least 65 people monthly in the housing process. • Funding Bissell Centre (June 1, 2023 - April 30, 2024) would require \$2.29 million. • Funding Boyle Street Community Services (The Boyle Street Service Society) (November 1, 2023 - April 30, 2024) would require \$1.5 million. 	

Option: Additional Bridge Housing Spaces (Unfunded)		
Short Description	Estimated Cost	
Administration will work with Homeward Trust to add 200 bridge housing spaces.	\$11 to \$13 million per year	
<i>Additional Bridge Housing Spaces - Options Analysis</i>		
Detailed Description	Considerations	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Administration will work with Homeward Trust to identify additional 200 shelter and housing spaces, such as continuous stay shelter or bridge housing • City would solicit proposals from agency partners, which could result in one or more sites being identified for the 200 spaces 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bridge housing typically requires between \$150 and \$165 per night, per space in funding • For 200 spaces, this would require between \$11 and \$13 million per year 	

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<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A continuous stay shelter would offer private or semi-private sleeping facilities and allow individuals to stay at the facility for as long as they need while an individual plan for housing is created.• Bridge Housing is short-term, continuous stay private accommodation that helps people 'bridge' the gap from homelessness to permanent housing	
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This is Exhibit "E" referred to in the Affidavit of
Devyn Ens, sworn this 15th day of September, 2023



CHRISTOPHER WIEBE
LAWYER

Responses to City Council Questions on the Proposed Operating Budget

Document: Operating Budget Book

Question #: 23-0310P

Document Page #: 108

Asked By: Councillor Stevenson

Question:

Encampment and Unsheltered Homelessness

- a) Are there opportunities for the previously approved \$900k in Indigenous outreach teams to support and strengthen this work through a COTT-like model, pairing social service agencies with the new Park Rangers?
- b) What are the limitations of this strategy if no additional shelter, bridge, or housing options are made available?
- c) Would investment in the unfunded Hotel Based Approach for Homelessness Response be complementary to the proposed Encampment and Unsheltered Homelessness program?
- d) Could the additional Park Ranger resources also complement and support the River Valley Trails strategy (if funded) in terms of monitoring and enforcing the use of unofficial trails?

Answer:

Community Standards and Neighbourhoods Branch

a) The composition, outcomes, and subsequent approach taken by the Community Outreach Transit Team (COTT) and the High Risk Encampment Team (HRET) are significantly different. The HRET is a joint task team of both Park Ranger Peace Officers and Edmonton Police Service Officers. COTT does not assess encampment risks, schedule and coordinate the removal of large scale encampments involving multiple persons with unauthorized structures on public land, or deal with the encampment complaints investigated by the High Risk Encampment Team.

Because of the risks posed to encampment occupants and the surrounding community, high risk encampments are closed quickly to protect public safety.

The team coordinates follow-up outreach services for sites identified as low or moderate risk. It is not advisable for outreach workers to attend during the initial assessment of the complaint. Even with additional resources, this would reduce Park Ranger response times to initial assessments, potentially reduce the ability of outreach workers to establish a meaningful connection with encampment occupants, and likely increase inquiries about delays in complaint response times.

The \$900k for Indigenous outreach in the encampment program was defined as contracting additional encampment outreach social workers from Indigenous-led organizations. While fully funded, the Indigenous outreach in the encampment program has a different intent for delivery than what the COTT program provides in transit spaces.

b) If no additional shelter, bridge, and/or housing options for people living in encampments is made available, Administration will continue to work with partners to access existing options. Specific options for people sleeping outside that can account for their transiency and corresponding need for immediate intake of their person and belongings, with appropriate health and social supports in place, can increase the number of people accessing housing directly from encampments each year. Outreach without investment in shelter, bridge, and housing options from all orders of government leaves a significant gap in the housing spectrum and Edmontonians, with the most complex needs, such as those in encampments, will continue to be challenged to secure adequate, stable housing.

c) The unfunded Hotel Based Approach for Homelessness Response is a complementary service package that would support the current and proposed encampment response. Administration had success piloting this model for approximately three months in early 2021, where 58 of 62 unique participants accessed bridge housing directly from encampments. Thirty one of those individuals moved into permanent housing and an additional 18 accessed other bridge housing options when the pilot was finished, preventing 49 individuals from moving back into encampments.

Responses to City Council Questions on the Proposed Operating Budget

d) The additional Park Ranger Peace Officers have been identified as necessary to respond to the 344% increase in illegal encampment complaints (2018 to 2022 YTD). These resources will also create capacity to implement encampment response prototypes, in 2023 and beyond, from a continuous improvement lens.

The approval of these additional positions will enable the redeployment of five Park Ranger Peace Officer positions back into the general duty teams to patrol, monitor and enforce on improved and unimproved trails on parkland, amongst other duties. They will not have capacity to support the River Valley Trails strategy.

Responses to City Council Questions on the Proposed Operating Budget

Document: Operating Budget Book

Question #: 23-140OP

Document Page #: p. 108

Asked By: Councillor Rutherford

Question:

Proposed 2023-2026 Operating Budget: Encampment and Unsheltered Homelessness Response - How will this program address the movement of encampments to neighbouring communities outside of the downtown core?

Answer:

Community Standards and Neighbourhoods Branch

When encampment residents were asked about location choices during the human-centered engagement this summer, many spoke about maintaining proximity to social services in the downtown core. Outreach teams have also shared that there is diversity among those that are in encampments in the downtown core and those that are south of the river or camping in neighbourhoods further from downtown.

Without the resources and data to track the movement of individual campers, it is not possible to confirm that individuals are, in fact, moving from the downtown core to neighbouring communities. The current resourcing level for encampment response does not allow for proactive patrols in communities adjacent to high density encampment zones. As such, the potential to identify new locations and potential migration sites is significantly limited.

This service package includes additional program resources coupled with the six to eight low and high fidelity prototypes that would be delivered could provide additional insight into the movement of individual campers from downtown core to neighbouring community locations. However, the tracking of individual campers would be an extremely labour intensive undertaking and is outside the scope of this service package which is focused predominantly on closing the existing gaps between service demand (encampment-related complaints, assessments and closures) and resource levels.

Responses to City Council Questions on the Proposed Operating Budget

Document: Operating Budget Book

Question #: 23-207OP

Document Page #: 110

Asked By: Councillor Tang

Question:

Problem/Derelict properties initiative funded package:

1. Why can't the Development of Derelict Residential Subclass unfunded service package (in addendum) be included or integrated in this one?
2. Has the funding approved for this work in 2022 fully utilized?
3. Do we see encampments in the river valley and in empty lots/building at the same rate? Are there synergies here to leverage resources between the two areas - Problem Properties and Encampment Response?

Answer:

Community Standards and Neighbourhoods Branch

1) Problem / derelict properties initiative service package 23-207OP was specifically created following City Council's direction on April 19, 2022. On October 28, 2022, the Community and Public Services Committee asked Financial and Corporate Services to bring an unfunded service package to the budget deliberations around the derelict tax subclass in a limited area. Service Package 23-207OP was submitted through the 2023-2026 budget process earlier this year, whereas the tax subclass option was created recently.

2) The majority of the one-time funding provided to the Community Standards & Neighbourhoods branch has been spent.

3) The City's encampment response and the problem properties initiative both use partnership response models and coordinated approaches to address a spectrum of demands. With that said, the two responses engage different partnering agencies and use different legislation and services to accomplish the work. The problem properties initiative focuses on occupied and unoccupied buildings that require a multi agency response to locations that are an extraordinary demand on services and are a public safety risk to the surrounding community. The encampment response for the entire city supports a population that is rarely encountered during problem property inspections, which normally have people living inside the buildings, unless the City is there to board them up. Leveraging different areas of expertise and authority, a referral network between the groups has been built to develop the right response when we receive a complaint or concern from the public. To use the same resources for both bodies of work could overly complicate and conflate responses.

Responses to City Council Questions on the Proposed Operating Budget

Document: Operating Budget Book

Question #: 23-272OP

Document Page #: 249

Asked By: Councillor Tang

Question:

Transit Safety Resource Stabilization

1. Assuming there would not be TPOs on every bus, what data do you have on which buses are least fare compliant? What kind of data do you have to support that TPO presence will increase compliance?
2. What is the different between COTT and TCAT?
3. Can you confirm if the funding previously allocated to staff additional COTT teams was fully deployed by fall 2022 (Expansion funding from SOBA)? Is this request for an additional 7 (on top of the previous request of I believe also 7 teams) and how realistic is it for the funding allocated here to be fully deployed? Are there any anticipated hiring constraints?

Answer:

Community Standards and Neighbourhoods Branch

1) Fare compliance on specific buses is not available. In 2019, buses were confirmed and communicated to riders as proof of payment areas, related to the Transit Passenger Conduct Bylaw 8353. Part II of the Bylaw stipulates that in order to use public transit, a rider must pay valid fare. It also outlines the requirement to show proof of payment upon request by a Transit Peace Officer. In 2019, during the ETS Revenue Management Audit by the Office of the City Auditor, it was noted that there is an increased risk of fare evasion on buses and it was recommended to establish fare evasion procedures for the Transit Peace Officers. Administration agreed to this recommendation. Fare evasion checks on buses are a requirement of the fare management system and control framework for revenue management. It also helps to reduce fare disputes between Transit Operators and riders, and reduce associated risks of Operator assaults by encouraging fare compliance.

On the LRT, Transit Peace Officer (TPO) presence can be directly correlated with fare compliance. Administration monitors a fare evasion rate in comparison to the number of riders checked per month. This data indicates that there is a lower fare evasion rate for months with higher numbers of riders checked.

2) The Community Outreach Transit Team (COTT) is a partnership between the City of Edmonton Transit Peace Officers and Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society. COTT's goal is to provide an alternative approach to traditional law enforcement tactics with a well being and harm reduction approach with our vulnerable community. COTT provides navigation to social services and programs including gaining access to shelters, housing options, medical aid and trauma treatment.

The Transit Community Action Team (TCAT) is a proactive engagement TPO team focusing on high visibility and community engagement on our transit system. TCAT deploys data-led, hot spot and crime reduction methodologies to create an increased perception of safety through high visibility uniform presence.

3) COTT was initially provided funding through the April 19, 2021 report (FCS00546 - COVID-19 Funding Requests 2021), as follows: \$470K (2021) for two COTT teams through to July 2022 and \$940K (2022) for four COTT teams through to July 2023.

COTT was provided additional funding of \$2.55M through the February 22, 2022 report (OCM01037 - Transit Safety and Security) to fund three additional COTT teams through to July 2025. All funding for 2022 has been fully allocated.

The unfunded Transit Safety Resource Stabilization service package will create seven permanent ongoing COTT teams, composed of Transit Peace Officers and Bent Arrow contracted outreach workers, by providing funding for the initial three teams beyond July 2023 and funding for the additional four teams beyond July 2025.

Hiring constraints would be minimal from a transit peace officer perspective as they are already hired and in the field. Bent

Responses to City Council Questions on the Proposed Operating Budget

Arrow's recruitment of outreach workers is underway, with some constraints in recruitment due to a variety of reasons, including community capacity and lack of long term funding. Hiring in the social service field is also becoming more difficult due to exhaustion and burn out of social support workers. Outreach without investment in shelter, bridge, and housing options from all orders of government leaves a significant gap in the housing spectrum. Edmontonians with the most complex needs, such as those in encampments, will continue to be challenged to secure adequate, stable housing.

Responses to City Council Questions on the Proposed Operating Budget

Document: Operating Budget Book

Question #: 23-334OP

Document Page #: 249

Asked By: Councillor Salvador

Question:

How many COTT teams current exist? If available, please provide evaluation related to COTT teams, and specifically TPOs helping improve safety on transit. Please break out the expenditures for the COTT teams, including outreach workers and TPOs. Is there an incremental opportunity to gradually add TPOs?

Answer:

Community Standards and Neighbourhoods Branch

Currently, there are two active COTT teams consisting of a TPO and Bent Arrow outreach worker. A third team is coming online as an additional Bent Arrow outreach worker is being onboarded. The remaining four COTT TPOs were selected in August and are currently working in the field in regular operations as the remaining Bent Arrow outreach workers are recruited. Bent Arrow's recruitment of outreach workers is underway, with some constraints in recruitment due to a variety of reasons, including community capacity and lack of long term funding. Hiring in the social service field is also becoming more difficult due to exhaustion and burn out of social support workers. Outreach without investment in shelter, bridge, and housing options from all orders of government leaves a significant gap in the housing spectrum and Edmontonians, with the most complex needs, such as those in encampments, will continue to be challenged to secure adequate, stable housing.

COTT Evaluation:

COTT's primary role is to support individuals to connect to community based services. In the short term, the impact of the initiative is most felt at the micro or individual level. Between September 27, 2021- September 30, 2022, COTT has had over:

- 2500 interactions where COTT team members are sharing information about COTT and how they can help.
- 500 engagements where specific referrals are made based on needs and/or a transport or soft hand-off was facilitated.
- 250 interactions where transportation support was provided.
- 30 different agencies or services, including mental health resources, shelters, pharmacies, and doctors, COTT has physically connected individuals to.
- 250 unique individuals COTT has provided ongoing follow-up support to (data reporting began in January 2022).
- 150 unique individuals the team has supported in completing their short term goals which include housing, health and identification related support.

Currently, there are 96 Transit Peace Officers to complement Transit Safety. Shifts are broken down in a 24/7 shift cycle and at any given time city wide and at full complement there are 10 TPOs covering the robust ETS network.

Expenditures:

- Seven COTT TPOs - \$910,000 including overhead
- COTT fleet leasing - \$60,000
- Bent Arrow Outreach - Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society received \$650,000 for 2022-2023, consistent with their budget request. The requested funding provides for seven outreach workers, and also supports a team lead, supervisor, and related program expenditures.

An incremental approach to hiring will be part of the proposed growth model, as there are capacity constraints to the peace officer recruitment, hiring, and training. A hiring strategy will be built to manage the growth around that capacity and seasonal consideration for service calls.

Responses to City Council Questions on the Proposed Operating Budget

Document: Operating Budget Book

Question #: 23-343OP

Document Page #: 108

Asked By: Councillor Salvador

Question:

How does the Encampment and Unsheltered Homelessness Response interact with our move towards Indigenous-led encampment outreach?

Answer:

Social Development Branch

Working with Indigenous agencies to increase the number of interdisciplinary Indigenous-led encampment outreach teams in Edmonton remains a priority for Administration. Indigenous peoples continue to be disproportionately represented among people experiencing homelessness due to various factors including lack of access to safe, affordable, and culturally appropriate housing and experiences of intergenerational trauma, systemic racism and discrimination.

Responding to the current homelessness crisis will require diverse and culturally appropriate responses across the housing continuum from sleeping rough and encampments, to shelters and affordable housing. The City is demonstrating significant commitment to this by:

- Working with an Indigenous Elders and Wisdom Holders to integrate Indigenous practices into human centered engagement and prototype development with encampment residents,
- Working with Bent Arrow Traditional Healing Society's indigenous outreach teams,
- Developing indigenous-led shelter and wellness supports, such as the kihciy askiy cultural site and Indigenous Cultural Wellness Center and
- Supporting Indigenous-led affordable housing through recently approved Affordable Housing Investment Program grants to Paul Band First Nation, Metis Capital Housing Corporation, and Tribal Chief Ventures Inc.

However, this work is far from done. There are a limited number of organizations who are able to quickly operationalize teams with the unique skill sets needed to support and house people with complex needs who are living outside. Staffing and capacity continue to be significant challenges in the homeless serving sector. Administration continues to have conversations with Indigenous organizations to solicit interest from organizations to expand their role in this work. Administration is also looking at creative options to increase capacity, including partnerships with non-Indigenous organizations to facilitate collaboration and training, and encouraging cultural awareness training and programing for existing, non-indigenous organizations, operators, and providers.

Responses to City Council Questions on the Proposed Operating Budget

Document: Operating Budget Book

Question #: 23-455OP

Document Page #: p. 108

Asked By: Councillor Rutherford

Question:

Proposed 2023-2026 Operating Budget: What is the rationale for the Encampment and Unsheltered Homelessness Response being funded as ongoing, vs. one-time multi-year? What are the implications of funding this program as one-time multi-year, given the City's goal that the number of encampments and people experiencing homelessness decrease over the next several years?

Answer:

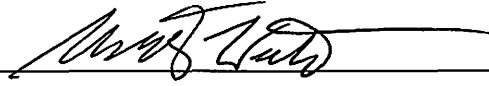
Community Standards and Neighbourhoods Branch

Administration is approaching the Encampment and Unsheltered Homelessness Response as ongoing in recognition of the need for adequate resources to meet the increased calls for service about encampments. The rate of calls have risen 344% between 2017 and 2022 year to date. The ongoing approach also ensures there are resources in place to deliver other work being proposed on homelessness prevention and the prototyping related to safety, respect, cleanliness, communication, and coordinated data. To date, no FTEs have been dedicated to this work, which has meant that Park Ranger peace officers have been pulled from their regular duties of stewarding public safety and education in the city's parkland spaces to address the growing encampment issues city-wide.

It can take anywhere from three to nine months to recruit, onboard and train new Park Ranger peace officers to deliver encampment response team services. These activities are further complicated by the significant labour market shortages currently being experienced. In recent years it has proven challenging to attract qualified candidates to temporary job postings when many organizations have permanent vacancies.

It is indeed the City's goal that the number of encampments and people experiencing homelessness decrease over the next several years. Depending on the outcome of this collective work, future budget adjustment requests may come forward impacting the resources of this ongoing service package with recommendations for reductions, increases or fundamental changes to the FTE component.

This is Exhibit "F" referred to in the Affidavit of
Devyn Ens, sworn this 15th day of September, 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christopher Wiebe", written over a horizontal line.

CHRISTOPHER WIEBE
LAWYER



January 2023

Staying Outside is Not a Preference: Homelessness in Edmonton

PREPARED FOR
CITY OF EDMONTON ENCAMPMENT RESPONSE TEAM

PREPARED BY
MAPS ALBERTA CAPITAL REGION

The Complex Needs Banning Research Team acknowledges we are situated on land known as Amiskwaciwâskahikan on Turtle Island which is colonially referred to as Treaty 6 territory or Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. This is land occupied, travelled, and cared for by Indigenous Peoples since time immemorial to the present day.

We recognize this is a collective place many share as home. We honour and acknowledge that the inclusion for all who struggle with homelessness and complex needs is an act of reconciliation. We acknowledge these things as a reminder that we are all Treaty People bound to one another by the spirit and intent of treaty.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Edmontonians who experience marginalization because of unstable housing are negatively impacted when they are banned or barred from public spaces and more specifically spaces that provide services. These impacts are exacerbated for those who have complex needs and/or are staying outside.

This research project was a collaboration between the City of Edmonton's Encampment Response Team (ERT) and The Complex Needs Committee, a subset of the Sector Emergency Response Services. This project was funded by the City of Edmonton, Homeward Trust, and REACH Edmonton Council for Safe Communities, and carried out by Mapping and Planning Supports Alberta Capital Region (M.A.P.S.).

Two distinct reports arose out of this research: *Left Outside: The Experience of Being Banned in Edmonton* (n=118), and *Staying Outside is Not a Preference: Homelessness in Edmonton* (n=86: a subset of the 118 listed above). Data was also collected from Human Service agencies staff, City of Edmonton staff involved in encampment response, and mutual aid group workers.

The purpose of this project was to hear directly from community participants with lived experience of being banned or staying outside in the previous 12 months.

- The research team included two research assistants who were known and respected in the community and who had lived experience with being banned and staying outside.
- Outreach workers and a Research Assistant recruited participants who stayed outside to ensure that those who did not access services from data collection sites, were invited to participate.
- Data was collected outdoors when banning was a barrier, and in some cases agencies waived bans for the data collection times.
- To learn from those who work with people staying outside data was collected from agency staff, outreach workers, mutual aid workers and City of Edmonton Staff who respond to encampments.
- Data was collected from June to August 2022.

People are Diverse

While the majority of respondents were Indigenous (3 in 4), within the categories of Indigenous and non-Indigenous diversity in a number of areas was found.

- Overall males form the majority at 61% vs. 39% for females.
- 87% of females were Indigenous meaning that Indigenous females were far more likely to be homeless than their non-Indigenous counterparts.
- While only 1 in 10 had elementary school or no formal education, 3 in 10 completed high school, and 2 in 10 had completed post-secondary education.
- Few respondents were in attached relationships as 1 in 8 people. For this study attachment meant having someone close to you that could be relied upon for support and companionship.
- While 8 participants had stayed outside exclusively for the past 12 months, the majority had stayed in many different types of dwellings. While some moved in and out of institutions or family situations, other transitions between rentals and homelessness.
- While income for the large majority of participants was unstable, some had steadier sources of income such as CPP, OAS, and AISH.

Impacts of Being Banned are Greater if you are Staying Outside

- Staying outside meant living a public life. Carrying out private tasks in public spaces increased one's chances of being banned.
- Participants were more likely, than their housed counterparts, to be banned from spaces used by the general public, such as stores and malls.
- Participants were significantly more likely than their housed counterparts to be banned for reasons of trespassing, fighting, or sleeping, where the rates of being banned for these offences were at least 20% higher.
- Participants who stayed outside were also at least twice as likely to experience a range of negative impacts in many areas of their lives. The most prevalent negative impact was accessing personal care.
- Participants recognized how they were seen and judged in public places and worked at staying clean and tidy so that they could change their lives around, however, given their lack of access to facilities, this process was difficult.

Forcibly Moving People Reduces Opportunity and Dignity

While moving encampments happens in the interests of public safety, the reality is that if people have nowhere to go, difficult situation and challenged lives continue in a new location. These moves make the lives of encampment residents even more difficult. When people are moved:

- They are often forced to leave possessions behind due to challenges with carrying items. For the safety of the staff cleaning up encampments, items left behind are considered hazardous and must be disposed of.
- They may no longer be in proximity to services they commonly use.
- They may become separated from their community.
- Outreach workers have greater difficulty finding their clients in their new location, often resulting in considerable delays, or missed opportunities for health and housing services.
- Moving difficulties are exacerbated when one has mobility, health, or substance use issues.

Motivations and Choices are Diverse

The majority of participants did not see staying outside as a preference, but as a better option than staying in a shelter.

- Many reasons for choosing to stay outside rather than in shelters were offered, the top three reasons, at 50%+, were not feeling safe in shelters, shelters being over-crowded, and the lack of privacy at shelters.
- Reasons for not feeling safe in shelters included being near others with PTSD or addiction issues and being in a loud environment where one is afraid to fall asleep.
- Although only a small proportion of participants reported being in attached relationships, those who were, stated that they preferred to stay outside to be together.
- For male participants choosing spaces outdoors that were in proximity to services, such as food, was important. For others it was most important to be away from crowds in out of the way places as in the river valley or parkland.

- Female participants were more likely to report personal safety as the driving force in choosing a location to stay. While some said that being with a partner afforded them protection, others talked about choosing open locations such as under a bridge, to allow more than one escape route.
- Regardless of gender, many stated that it was safer to stay on the southside of the river where the homeless population was not as concentrated and there was less gang activity, even though there were fewer available services.

Health Issues and Supports

- Participants experienced an average of just over 4 out of 6 areas of health challenge.
- The majority of participants experienced health challenges (Trauma – 76%; Addiction/Substance Use – 74%; Medical illness or condition – 70%; Mental health – 62%; Physical disability – 57%)
- Given the difficulties that people who live outside experience, their challenges of daily survival were exacerbated by health conditions and lack of treatment.
- Health care access was not commensurate with health needs, with those who stayed outside being far less likely to receive care than their housed counterparts.
- Only a minority of participants received treatment for their health problems and only 10% received treatment for the most prevalent problem of trauma.

Mutual Respect and Relationships

Relationships built on mutual respect were key to successfully offering and receiving services. When one could see value in the other, understanding and empathy was fostered for community participants and those who helped them. This attitude was echoed by a large majority of participants.

- 3 in 4 community participants had contact with Outreach Staff, rating these contacts most highly at between *somewhat positive* and *very positive*.
- Rated second most positive, contact with Health Care Staff rated the quality of contact between *neutral* and *somewhat positive*, although only 33% of respondents had any contact with Health Care workers.
- Community participants recognized that they must work for positive interactions and respect those they come into contact with, however, they cited difficulties when they are desperate for service, using alcohol or substances, having mental health problems, or feeling that they are not respected.
- Those who provide supports indicated that the majority of the homeless don't cause trouble and would be relatively easy to house and support if appropriate space were available.

While housing for all Edmontonians is the answer to ending homelessness, the complexity of attaining this goal successfully means strong financial and human commitment. While working to this goal, it is imperative that those who are homeless are afforded fulfillment of their basic needs within a structure of dignity and respect. Suggested avenues to move forward include places and spaces for safe encampments, utilization of Indigenous knowledge, planning and service delivery, and working together for better communication and understanding.

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Staying Outside is Not a Preference: Homelessness in Edmonton

INTRODUCTION

This report is one of two reports coming out of the Complex Needs Banning Research (CNBR) project, one focusing on banning and the other focusing on people who stayed outside in the prior 12 months and were also banned¹.

CTV News reported in April 2022 that the number of people experiencing homelessness in Edmonton had doubled since before the pandemic in 2020 (CTV News, April 5 2022). In the same news article St. Amand of the Bissell Centre described encampments as *a byproduct of the inability of systems to provide the appropriate support to folks*.

In October 2022, The Alberta government announced 187M over a two-year plan to address addiction and homelessness which included 5M to be spent in Edmonton to create up to 450 more shelter spaces for a total of 1,072 beds city-wide (CTV News, October 1, 2022). As of late November 2022 Homeward Trust identified 2,706 people experiencing homelessness (<https://homewardtrust.ca/data-analytics-reporting>).

While this funding is necessary and helpful to support shelters and addiction treatment, only a minority of the funding is available for low-income housing units and/or operational budgets. Although there is a clear understanding that the standard for success is housing that is integrated with recovery-oriented supports, the current funding announced falls short. The Report of the Coordinated Community Response to Homelessness Task Force points to additional factors

Housing options remain limited, with glaring gaps when it comes to options suitable for clients with complex conditions. Options that used to be available have, over time, been dismantled or converted in response to Alberta's evolving economy. (Task Force, 2022, p6)

Over time, options that used to be available, such as single-room occupancy units, have disappeared or been converted. The resulting narrower continuum of options is undermining the effectiveness of community responses. (Task Force, 2022, p11)

The Complex Needs Committee

The Complex Needs Committee is a subset of Sector Emergency Response agencies in Edmonton. It consists of a group of service providers who meet regularly to discuss trends and identify gaps and potential solutions to issues arising within their sector. Following earlier work in Edmonton that explored the Banning of Youth (OSCMAP, 2017) they were interested in learning about banning practices and their effect on adults in the community; particularly the effect banning has on people with complex needs. From these interests the research project was born. Funding was provided by the City of Edmonton, Homeward Trust, and REACH Edmonton Council for Safe Communities (REACH).

¹ Left Outside: The Experience of Being Banned in Edmonton

Staying Outside is Not a Preference: Homelessness in Edmonton

As background to the research project, it was imperative to clearly define this groups' understanding of those with complex needs. They drew on the definition as outlined in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms. *People with complex needs include a diverse population that experience multiple barriers to accessing services, fulfilling their basic needs, or otherwise enjoying the basic human rights.* Every person accessing a service will have multiple needs, but it's the interaction of these multiple needs that leads to complexity. Issues people with complex needs may be dealing with are homelessness, substance use, mental health concerns, and physical health issues (such as mobility issues), as well as involvement with justice, racism, disabilities, trauma, and loss, among others.

Research Approach

This community-based research project recognized the strengths and perspectives of all members involved in the research. Community service providers and service users informed the process, vetted, and made meaning of the results. The intent was to facilitate understanding and change.

Guiding Principles

Collectively, the community partners and researchers defined the following guiding principles as the framework for the project:

- Work with an Indigenous Elder and/or Wisdom Holder to integrate Indigenous practice as required in the community and to center our research team.
- Honour the truth of research participants.
- Work with partners to nurture working relationships and emphasize ethical practice in the community.
- Use the 7 Grandfather teachings of the Anishanaabe: Love, Respect, Wisdom, Courage, Honesty, Humility, and Truth as a guide for all activities.
- Work with agencies to appropriately engage with community members.
- Be sensitive to the demands placed on agencies and research participants. This included informing ourselves of other data collection projects to be careful to not over engage the same people participating in other projects.
- Hire research staff who have lived experience and a strong knowledge and awareness of the community.

Setting and Background

Community-based research is subject to change, refocus, redesign, and differential perspectives and understanding. Researchers must be comfortable with ambiguity and change throughout the process and must be able to move outside the realm of expert to stand beside, and be guided and challenged by all involved.

Community involvement is imperative throughout the entire research project. Agency staff brought understanding through many lenses of inquiry, and through their subsequent perceptions and directions. Life experiences shaped the framework for the inquiry from which the project emerged.

Staying Outside is Not a Preference: Homelessness in Edmonton

Who was involved?

The Research Team

The role of the research team was to carry out the work guided by the advice, knowledge, and expertise of the community partner agencies. Deborah Morrison has well-established relationships of trust with community members, service providers, and local government and has served as the Executive Director and Partnership Enhancement Facilitator for M.A.P.S. Alberta Capital Region for over 20 years. Since Deborah's retirement during this project, Matthew "Gus" Gusul has taken Deborah's former role. Gus comes to M.A.P.S. with community experience and is known to many of the agencies involved in the CNBR project. Marlene Mulder's experience in research and data analysis, along with her work in the community with the homeless and with refugee sponsorships and settlement, grounds her in the community. Colette Cornejo brings experience interfacing between project teams and their stakeholders grounded in a wide variety of projects ranging from community health evaluations in remote First Nations communities to province-wide stakeholder consultations for Alberta Health. Jennifer Vogl supported the research project through her extensive knowledge of the human services sector in Edmonton as well as by securing a pRoject Ethics Community Consensus Initiative (ARECCI)² approval for the research project. The researchers have all lived and worked in Edmonton for most of their careers.

When hiring Research Assistants we wanted the research team to comprise experience and education. The job ad for research assistants was shared with our community partners. Research Assistant were recruited based on their experience with data collection, working in the community, and/or lived experience. They brought a wealth of experience to the project in Indigenous ceremony, front line work in partner agencies, as well as daily interactions with individuals staying outside. Research Assistants were also selected for their ability and willingness to work as part of a team and align with the approach and tools designed for the data collection.

Given the casual hours of work and the desire to retain staff, it was most important to offer training and experience that was of value to the research staff beyond the immediate project. Training included smudging, Indigenous research protocols, building rapport in the community, interviewing skills, data collection, and data entry. At the training session, time was also scheduled to role play, learn from each other, and build community.

Four research assistants were hired and retained throughout the project. The first was an Indigenous Elder, community knowledge keeper and prayer camp volunteer. This individual described their role in the community as being *to provide emotional, mental and spiritual supports to all*. Another Indigenous RA was well known in the community as *Uncle*, the person who cared and checked in on people. This individual had work experience in shelters and doing data collection with street level populations as well as first-hand knowledge of the inner workings of running encampments, including camp sustainability. The third research assistant was a 2nd year Masters in Counselling student with work experience in Edmonton as both a street team worker and a shelter worker for one of the community partner agencies. The final research assistant was a 5th year University of Alberta student completing a combined degree program towards a Bachelor of Arts in Native Studies as well as a Bachelor of Arts in Elementary Education.

² <https://albertainnovates.ca/programs/arecci/>

Staying Outside is Not a Preference: Homelessness in Edmonton

Indigenous Partner

This project was greatly enhanced by the involvement of staff from NiGiNan Housing Ventures. They provided guidance and resources to ensure Indigenous content and protocols were included in a respectful and meaningful way throughout the project. They supported the development of the project methodology and data collection tools and offered suggestions and insight for working in the community. They also helped start off the data collection phase of the work in a good way by hosting a Traditional Nehiyawak Feast in their ceremony room at Ambrose Place.

Community Partners

Representatives from community partner agencies, comprised largely of members of the Complex Need Group, sat on one of two tables for the purpose of this research project. The Project Support Group (PSG) where members helped define the purpose, the potential actions and desired learnings from the research, provided the funding, and proposed project goals and membership. PSG members were from Homeward Trust Edmonton, Hope Mission, The Mustard Seed, The City of Edmonton, REACH Edmonton Council for Safer Communities, NiGiNan Housing Ventures, and the M.A.P.S. Research Team.

The Project Development Group (PDG) comprised people who were engaged with or had direct experience serving people with complex needs. The PDG was responsible for vetting the methodology, ensuring that the goals and scope of research, as defined by the PSG, shaped the question themes, and vetting data collection tools. Some members of this group hosted data collection events and recruited individuals to participate in the research. PDG members were from Bissell Centre, Boyle Street Community Services, Homeward Trust Edmonton, Hope Mission, Jasper Place Wellness Centre, NiGiNan Housing Ventures, REACH Edmonton Council for Safer Communities, The Mustard Seed, and the M.A.P.S. Research Team.

City of Edmonton Encampment Response Team

Early in the project, the research team was approached by City employees on the Encampment Response Team (ERT) with a proposed collaboration. The ERT was working on responding to a recommendation outlined in the 2021 Encampments Response Evaluation Report that *encampment occupants be engaged to help inform the encampment response* and had identified an overlap in the population who are impacted by banning and those who are likely to interact with the encampment ecosystem (Edmonton, 2021). The ERT was also interested in collaborating with MAPS because of their multi-dimensional approach to collaborative planning, which includes community mapping and the development of journey maps.

Out of a shared desire to not overburden this population, the two teams set out to define how questions related to encampment could be integrated into the data collection tools being developed for the research project. As part of the collaboration, MAPS committed to provide analysis and a separate report based on questions specific to the encampment experience to the ERT. The City of Edmonton provided additional funding to enable this work.

Staying Outside is Not a Preference: Homelessness in Edmonton

METHODOLOGY

Data collection methods and tools needed to be flexible to meet the needs and situations of community members and supporting organizations, but consistent to ensure that data could be compared and contrasted.

Data collection sites and locations were chosen depending on agency and research participants needs and situations. The majority of data collection was done at partner agencies. To address the challenge of finding individuals that do not engage with the shelter system one data collection event was held at a neutral venue that was neither a human services agency nor a shelter.

This event was meant primarily for individuals that stay in encampments near Whyte Avenue. The idea for the event and a large portion of the recruitment leading up to it are credited to the insight and efforts of one of the research assistants with lived experience of banning and homelessness. He walked areas where those who stay outside had tents or shelters to invite them to participate in the research. Outreach staff from partner agencies and from the host site also spent time in the days leading up to data collection promoting the event in their daily interactions with individuals who may not access services at agencies.

Research staff worked with partner agencies that offered to host data collection events at their sites. Prior to the event research staff visited each host site to collectively decide how to best use the physical space available and to help the community partners understand the approach and format that the research team would be using the day of the data collection. Agencies were also asked for advice about what type of food and gift cards would be appropriate for individuals at their site. These visits provided a good opportunity for research staff to address questions, and to reinforce with agencies the research teams' commitment to accommodate host and participant needs and interests. Sites were also provided with posters to advertise the upcoming data collection events. In neighborhoods with multiple agencies, sites also cross-promoted each other's events.

Research schedule

A research schedule was developed with the goal of interviewing 100 individuals that had experience with being banned.

- October 2021 – May 2022: Seeking funding, meetings with project support group, project development group, and COE Encampment Response group
- June 2022: Traditional Nehiyawak Feast hosted by NiGiNan Housing Ventures
- June 2022: Ethics approval – A pRoject Ethics Community Consensus Initiative (ARECCI)
- June 6 – August 18, 2022: Data collection
- August – September 2022: Development of project maps
- August – October: Data analysis and report writing
- November 2022: Target for completion of Final report and dissemination of data products.

Staying Outside is Not a Preference: Homelessness in Edmonton

Data Collection

The study comprised two data collection components. Community participants completed a 9-page survey through a one-on-one in-person interview led by a research team member. This method allowed each participant to have designated time with someone who was there just for them. Following the completion of their survey, individuals were invited to a focus group discussion.

On-site Practices

- Three hours were typically scheduled for data collection and all data collection was done during the day on a weekday. At the suggestion of several host sites, data collection was often done in the morning; when individuals would be more likely to participate. To be respectful of each collaborating agency's needs and nature, the data collection format as outlined below served as a guideline and could be modified as required. Research staff worked with agency staff on site who provided support by setting aside the space for data collection and by recruiting participants.
- Research staff arrived on-site 30 minutes prior to data collection to set up the physical space and be fully available and attentive to community members when they arrived.
- The lead researcher was present at every data collection and led all focus group discussions.
- A refreshment station was set up with tea and coffee for use throughout the data collection event.
- The Elder from the research team offered spiritual care as requested.
- The format and purpose of the research were explained by the research staff and participants were able to ask questions and voice concerns.
- Participants completed their survey through one-on-one interview with a member of the research team.
- Demographic information was collected so that we would be able to understand who is or has experienced banning and so that data could later be analyzed through different lenses.
- At the beginning of the survey, a qualifying question was asked to screen for experience of banning.
- Research staff took notes on observations and reflections at focus group discussions.
- Focus group sessions were audio recorded and subsequently used to ensure the staff notes were accurate.
- Research staff cleaned and organized the space to leave it in the same condition as found on arrival.
- Research team debriefed following each data collection.
- All materials needed for data collection, from hard copies of the survey to disinfectant wipes to sanitize areas used to serve food, were carried to and from each data collection. This was done to minimize the burden on hosting agencies.

Participant Recruitment and Inclusion

For the purpose of this work, we were looking for individuals who had experienced being banned in the past 12 months. Participants were screened based on having had experienced being banned. This determination was self-defined. Individuals with these experiences are referred to in this report as *community participants*. Within this group those who had also stayed outside within the past 12 months were asked additional questions.

Staying Outside is Not a Preference: Homelessness in Edmonton

It was effective to depend on the research assistants with lived experience to talk to people, ask the screening questions, and invite them to participate. Because they had lived experience their invitations were authentic and legitimate:

We need your voice.

During this process for two hours, you're helping us.

You'll actually have a thumbprint in change, if that matters to you.

Some individuals were not able to participate because they were banned from the agencies where data collection was taking place, so the team moved their work outside on several occasions.

In the event that a community member was unable to stay long enough to complete both a survey and a focus group, the focus group questions were integrated into the surveys for that person. A major reason for not being able to stay inside the data collection site was concern for personal belongings that were left unattended outside. For these reasons, accommodation was required.

Compensation and Appreciation

- Community participants were given a \$25 gift card to thank them for their time. Choice was offered between a dollar store, a grocery store or a fast-food restaurant to accommodate participant needs and preferences. To meet our funder requirements, community participants were asked to sign for these cards, however, if there was discomfort around divulging a name, pseudonyms were welcomed.
- At whatever point in time seemed best for the participant, they were offered a meal. Often individuals arrived hungry and eating first would make it easier to sit and concentrate on the questions they were being asked. The best food the budget would allow (\$25/person) was ordered and it was always gone by the time the event wrapped up.
- Community participants were also given tokens of appreciation up to a value of approx. \$5/person. Items such as smokes, bus tickets, bus ticket pouches, and rain ponchos were helpful for putting people at ease and offering a small amount of comfort to individuals.

After Care Strategy

When organizing data collection events researchers requested that a staff member plan to be nearby during data collection in case a participant needed additional support during or after they participated in an interview or focus group. Community participants were offered a handout with the name of the staff on site that could be available to provide extra support for them if they felt they needed it in the hours and days following data collection. The handout also included the researchers' names and contact information with directions on how to access research findings.

Community Focus Groups

Focus groups were held to gain the perspective of other groups in Edmonton that work with those experiencing banning and those who live in encampments.

Two focus groups were held for staff that work at human services agencies. The first for staff that work inside the facility, primarily as drop-in or shelter staff and the second for staff that work outreach; meeting people and supporting them wherever they meet them. An additional focus group was held with a mutual aid group that provides outreach support to the street level population in Edmonton. Finally, a focus group was held with City of Edmonton staff that are involved in the various areas of the City's response to encampments. The questions focused on encampments.

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Deliverables

Sharing the Data

All research products will be broadly shared. Copies will be sent to the community partners and will also be available to download at no charge from the M.A.P.S. website at: <https://mapsab.ca/community-based-research/>

Research Documents

- Two research reports:
 - Staying Outside is Not a Preference: Homelessness in Edmonton
 - Left Outside: The Experience of Being Banned in Edmonton
- Executive summary or project highlights
- Infographic for community participants
- Journey maps
 - Research findings
 - Everyday in the Life of Homeless Edmontonians³

RESEARCH PARTICIPANTS

To learn about experiences of staying outside, the following entities were included in the research:

- 86 community participants who had been banned and stayed outside within the past 12 months (a subset of the 118 who were interviewed regarding their banning experiences)
- 10 staff from Human Services agencies
- 6 City of Edmonton staff involved in encampment response
- 4 Mutual Aid group volunteers

COMMUNITY PARTICIPANTS WHO ARE HOMELESS

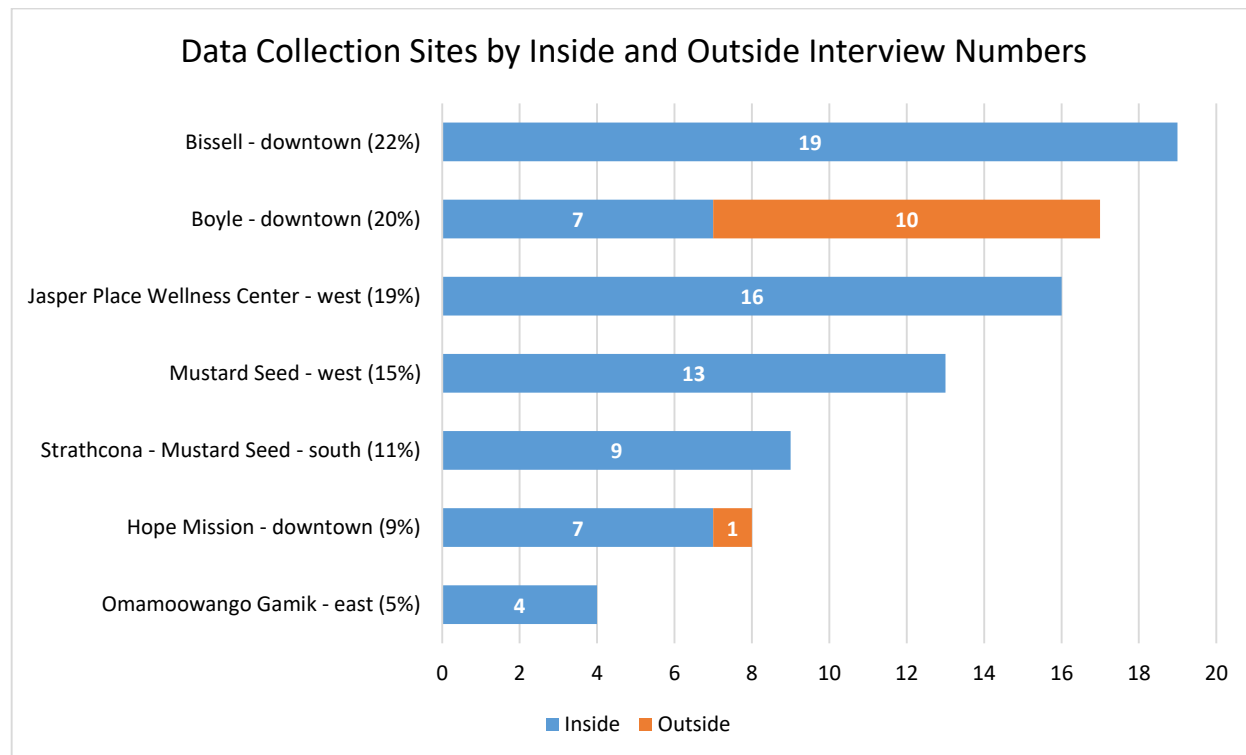
People who stayed outside in the prior 12 months comprised 73% of all community members in the Complex Needs Banning data collection. With the exception on the section including banning comparisons, this report refers to only the 86 persons who had lived stayed outside in the preceding 12 months. It is important to note that proportions and numbers are reported in many areas of this report. When using proportions, especially with low numbers it is prudent to note when a proportion is larger than the number it represents.

In order to reduce the likelihood that people had participated twice in the research the age and gender of all community participants were compared during the data analysis to ensure there were no duplicates. The same group of Research Assistants was used for every data collection event which provided the continuity required for staff to notice if an individual had tried to participate more than once in the study.

³ Jerry McFeeters, an Indigenous storyteller from Cold Lake First Nations Alberta who has first-hand experience living in encampments in Edmonton and supporting those staying outside as “Uncle Jerry” who supports the community.

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Seven agencies hosted data collection events. Because some of the community members, who wanted to participate in this project, were banned from the buildings where data collection was held, data collection was moved outdoors as required. One of the agencies waived all bans for the data collection event. The following table shows the number of community members who participated at each agency, as well as the delineation of those interviewed outside of the buildings.



Demographics

Age, Gender & Origin

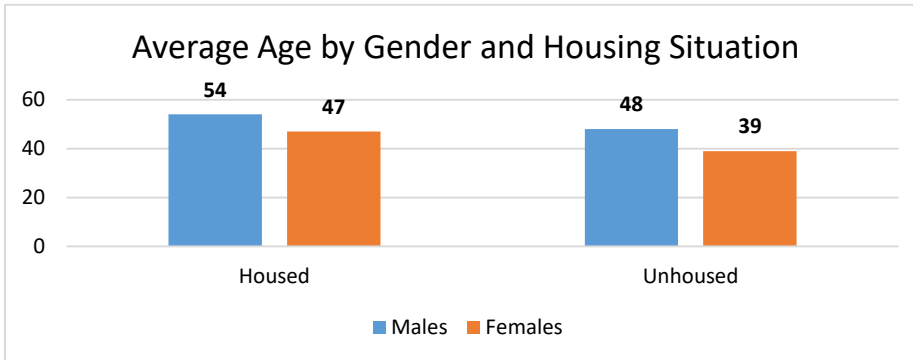
Three in four community members (64) identified as Indigenous. Indigenous participants came from 30 First Nations or communities. The Saddle Lake Cree Nation was most heavily represented with 8 respondents. The majority of Indigenous participants were First Nations – Treaty at 62%, followed by Métis at 25%, Non-status Treaty at 10%, and finally Inuit at 3%. While 2 in 3 Indigenous participants had personal experience at residential schools, day school, and/or the foster care system, almost all had relatives or friends with this experience.

Of the 86 community participants only three were born outside of Canada with the country of birth being reported as Africa, El Salvador, and Somalia. Four in five non-Indigenous participants identified as being racially ‘White’. A small minority reported being ‘Black’ (2), and ‘Latino’ (2).

Approximately 61% of participants identified as male, 37% identified as female, and two respondents identified as being non-binary. Eighty-seven percent (87%) of the females staying outside were Indigenous compared to only 13% who were non-Indigenous.

Staying Outside is Not a Preference: Homelessness in Edmonton

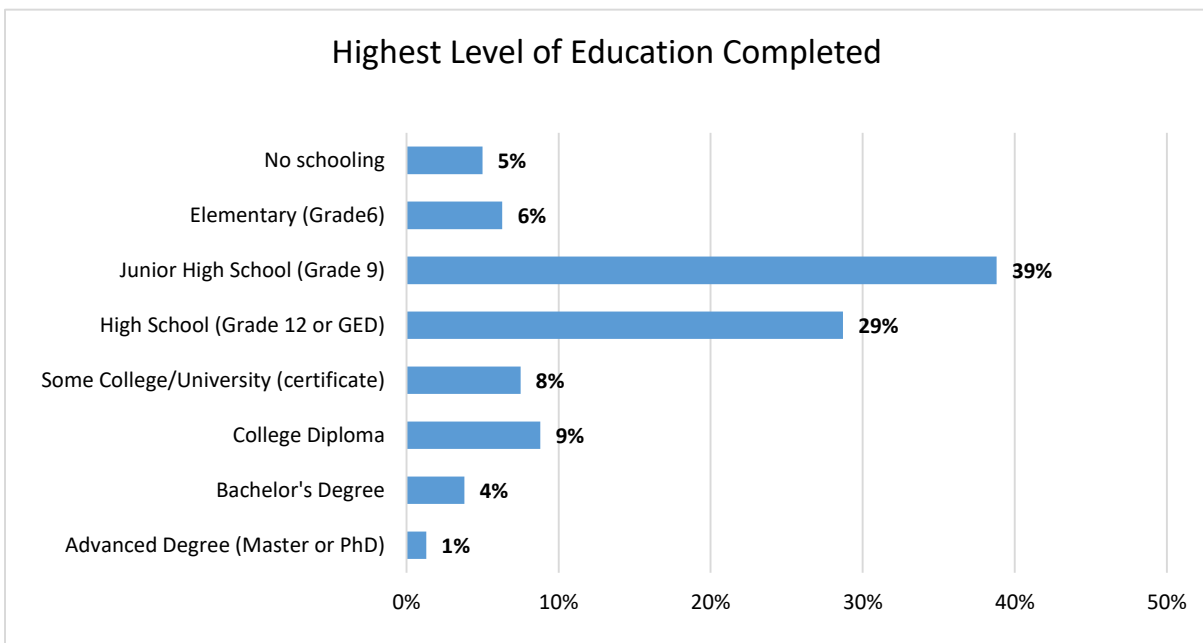
The average age for those who had stayed outside was 44 years with a range of 21 to 73 years old. Females who stayed outside were significantly younger than their male counterparts with an average age of 39 years as compared to the males whose average age was 48 years. A comparison also showed that those staying outside are significantly younger than those with housing regardless of gender.



Only one in ten participants reported being in an attached relationship (having a partner). Having an attached relationship can make a big difference in terms of safety. When asked to describe what it is like to live outside alone one participant responded, *Danger... people shooting up and fighting and stealing your stuff. You feel like you're in danger if you are by yourself.*

Education

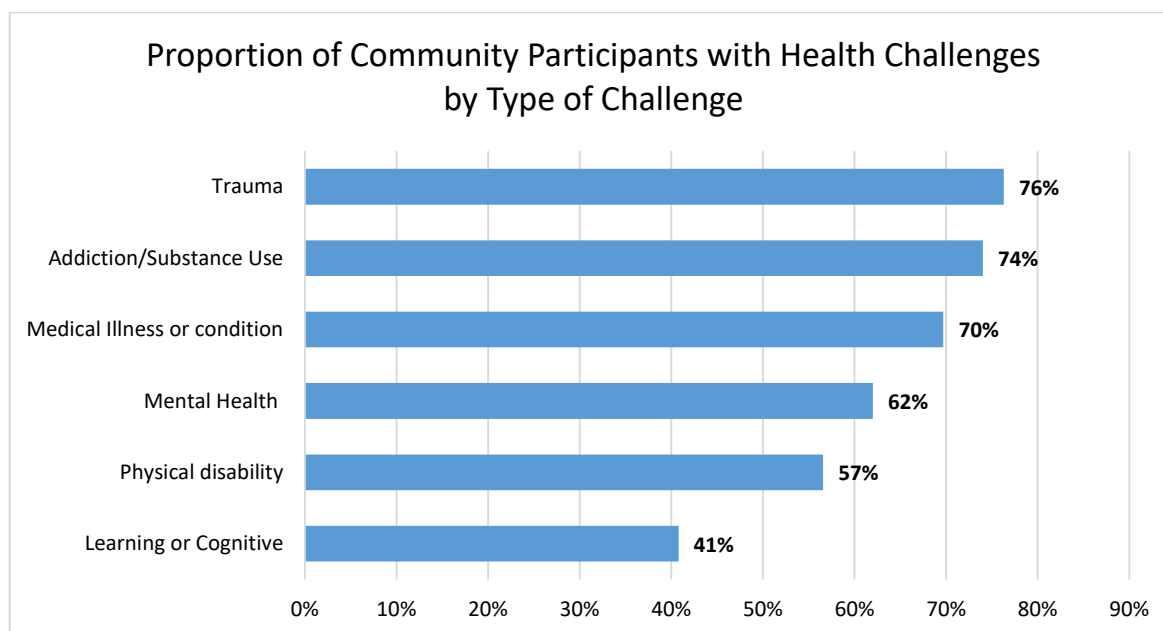
Fifty-one percent (51%) of participants who had stayed outside had completed at least high school or GED, however, their educational attainment is significantly less than those who are housed at 74%.



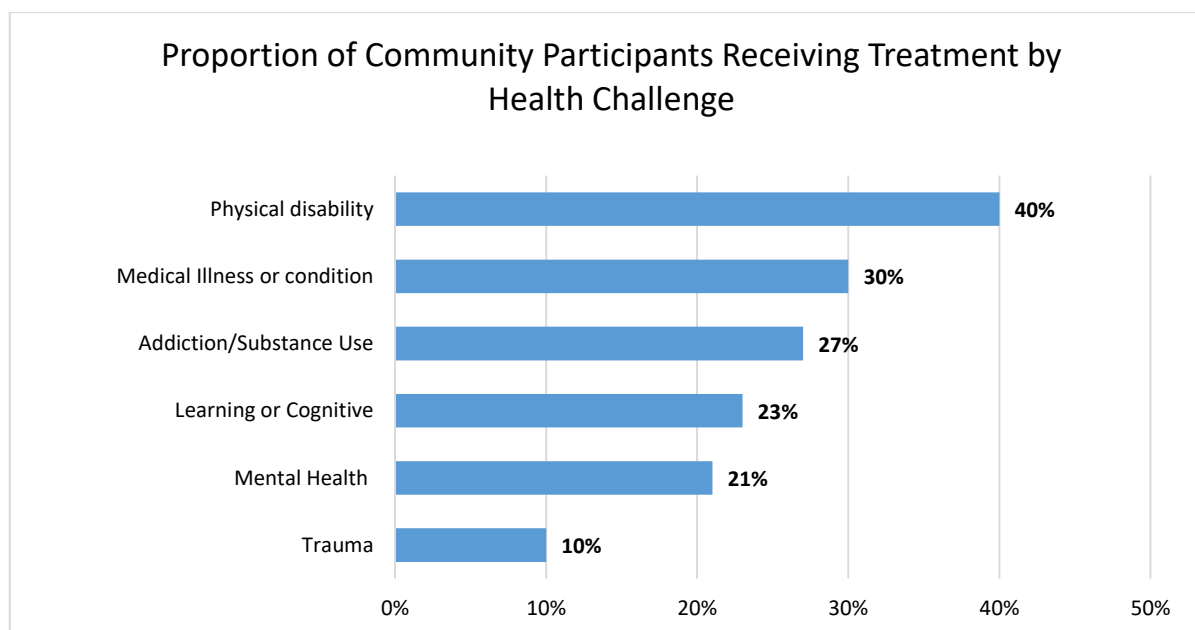
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Health

Seventy-six (76) participants answered the survey questions related to their health. Regarding their self-assessment of health, 20% considered themselves to be 'very unhealthy', and 38% reported being 'somewhat unhealthy'. The following table shows the number of participants with health challenges, (orange bar) and the number who had received treatment or support in dealing with those challenges. Participants were also asked about which type of health challenges they face, and whether or not they had received any treatment or support. The proportions of those with health challenges was high, ranging from 41% with learning or cognitive challenges to 76% trauma challenges.

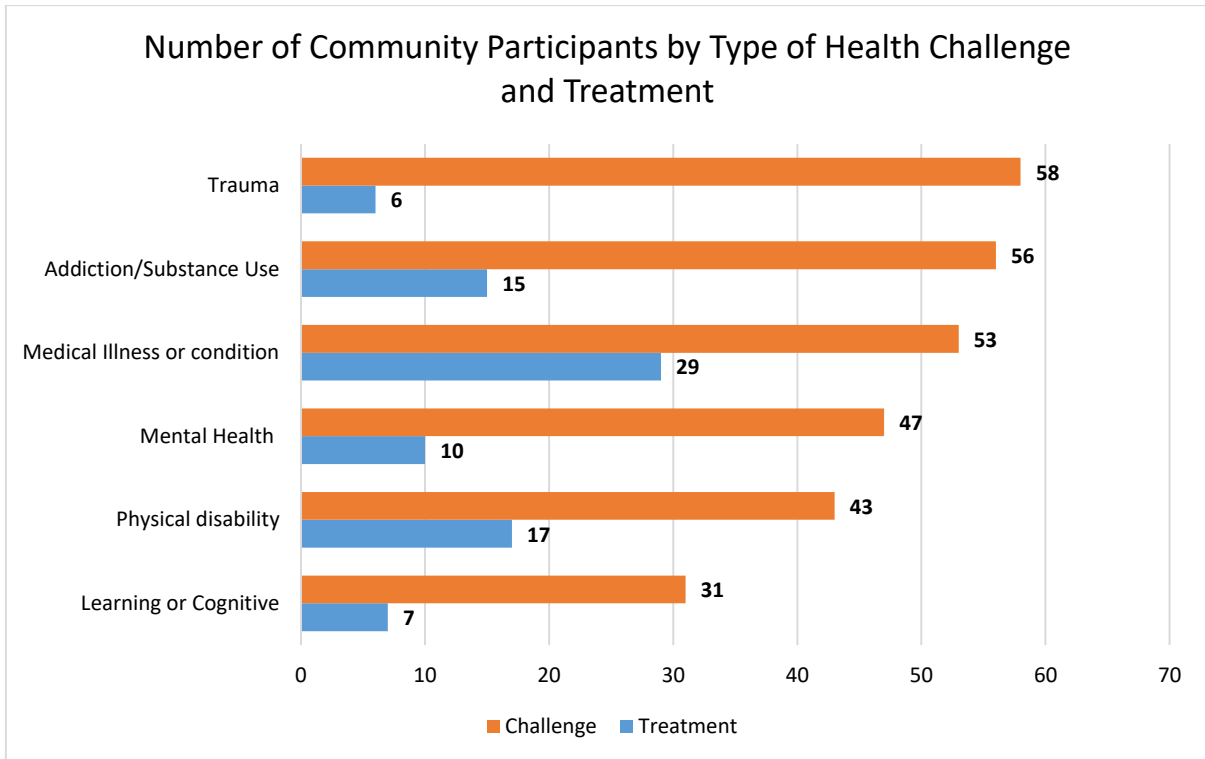


The following table shows the proportion of participants receiving treatment or support by specific health challenge. The highest support is 40% for physical disabilities and the lowest is for trauma at 10%.



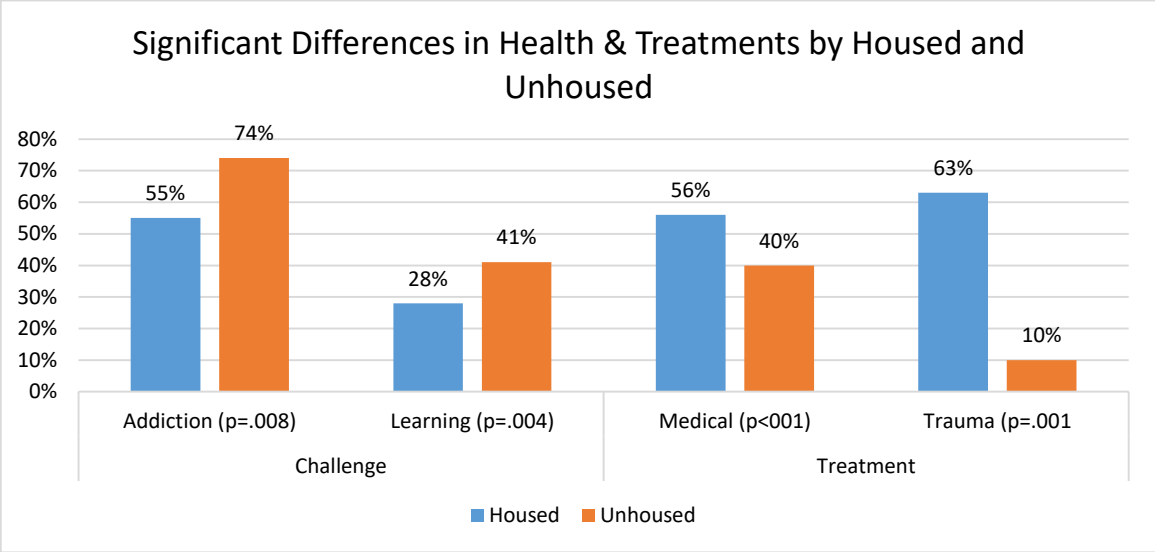
Staying Outside is Not a Preference: Homelessness in Edmonton

The following table shows the same health data that is listed above in proportions but is presented in numbers.

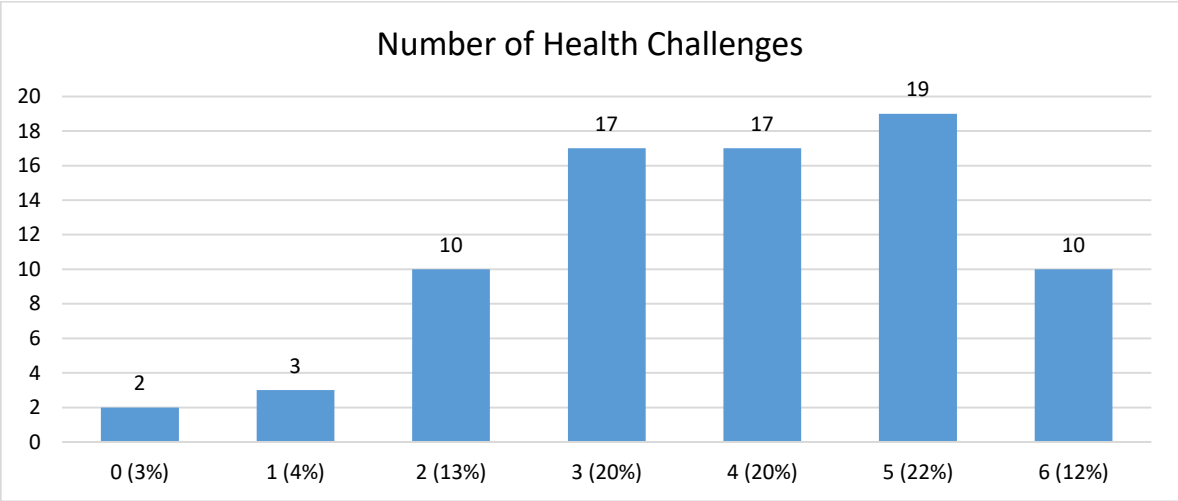


Significant differences between those who stay outside and those who are housed appear in four areas. Regarding health challenges participants who stay outside are more likely to experience addiction and or substance use at 74% compared with their housed counterparts at 55%. Those staying outside are also more likely to have learning or cognitive disabilities at 41% compared with 28% for the housed. Regarding treatment, significant differences are found in treatment for medical conditions or illness at 40% for those staying outside and 56% for the housed. Only 10% of participants who stay outside received treatment for trauma compared with 63% of those who are housed. Given the difficulties that people who live outside experience, their challenges of daily survival are exacerbated by health conditions and lack of treatment.

Staying Outside is Not a Preference: Homelessness in Edmonton



Six health challenges were measured. Only two participants reported having no health challenges, with an average number of 4.04 health challenges. This average is significantly more than for those who are housed at 3.38.



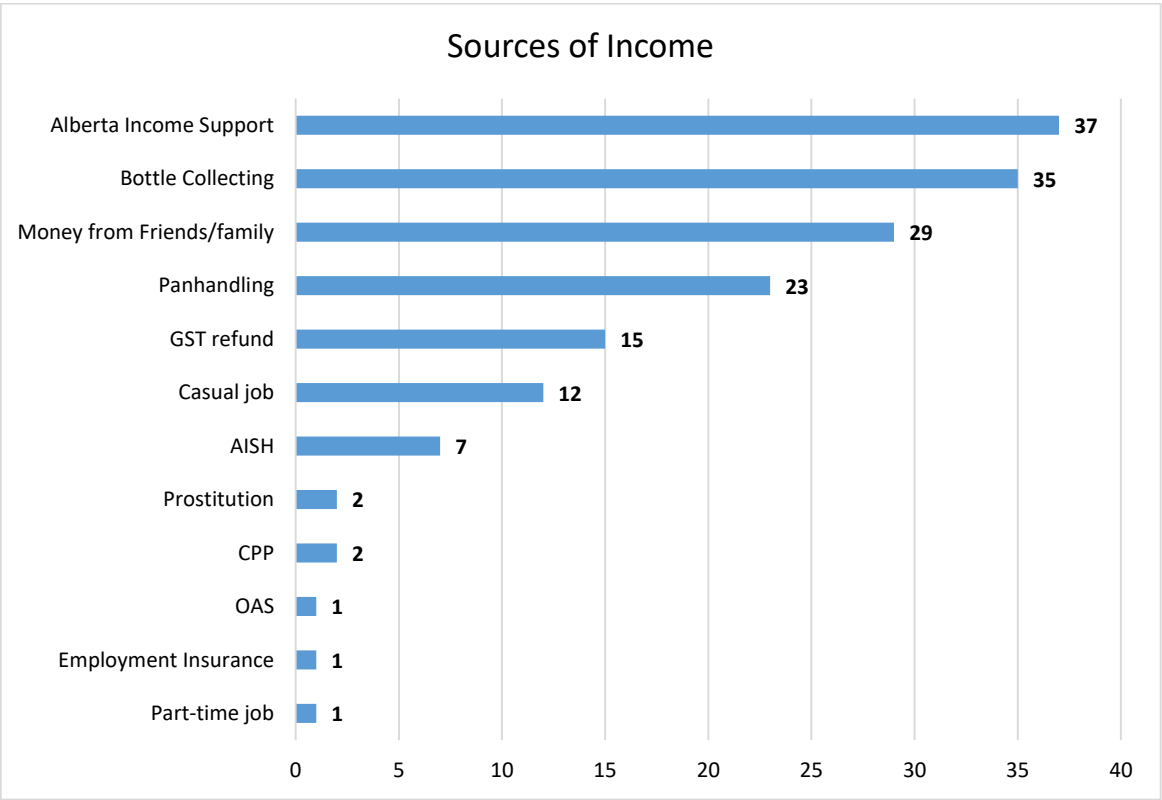
Agency staff talked about how bans are related to mental health issues and how it is often not possible to access help when it is needed. They gave an example of having to wait 5 hours for an assessment for someone with a suicide plan.

Agency staff don't have the resources and hit many barriers when trying to connect clients to mental health resources in the community. It can be really hard when we want to do right by somebody when they don't have the ability to maintain their behaviour in a safe way for everybody else.

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Income

Participants were asked about their income from all sources. Their responses, presented below, show multiple sources, almost none of which are steady or sufficient to cover basic necessities.



Staying Outside

Participants who had stayed outside in the prior 12 months were asked to provide more detail about all the places they had stayed overnight during that time. While many respondents used multiple types of accommodation, eight people stayed outside for the full 12 months. Of those Indigenous participants who reported gender, four were male and 3 were female. Their ages ranged from 23 to 54 years and none of them were in attached relationships. Six out of eight (75%) of these respondents did not stay in shelters because of the lack of privacy and not feeling safe at shelters.

On the other end of the spectrum, considering those who stayed the most places in the past 12 months, 15 people stayed at 5 or 6 places. In this group, 73% (n=11) were Indigenous, and slightly more than half were females (57%; n=8). Only one of the eight people who stayed outside for the whole year was in an attached relationship. The age range for this group was 30 to 55 years. The following list shows a breakdown of the places participants stayed in the past 12 months. Females who stayed outside were twice as likely to have lived in their own rented or owned space in the past 12 months (45% females vs. 22% males).

Staying Outside is Not a Preference: Homelessness in Edmonton

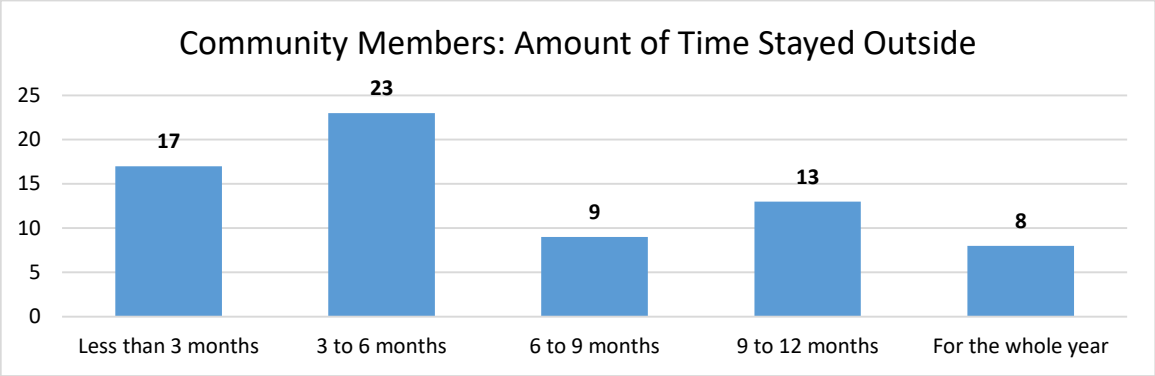
Places Stayed– Past 12 Months

- 8 people stayed outside only for the past 12 months
- 17 people stayed in 2 types of dwellings in the past 12 months
 - 8 (outside, couch)
 - 6 (outside, shelter)
 - 1 (outside, PSH/Harm⁴)
 - 1 (outside, short term)
 - 1 (outside, rent)
- 28 people stayed in 3 types of dwellings in the past 12 months
 - 18 (outside, couch, shelter)
 - 4 (outside, shelter, rent)
 - 5 (outside, shelter, short term)
 - 1 (outside, couch, rent)
- 18 people stayed in 4 types of dwellings in the past 12 months
 - 7 (outside, couch, shelter, rent)
 - 3 (outside, couch, shelter, short term)
 - 4 (outside, couch, shelter, PSH/Harm)
 - 2 (outside, couch, short term/ rent)
 - 1 (outside, couch, PSH/Harm, rent)
 - 1 (outside, short term, rent, family)
- 12 people stayed in 5 types of dwellings in the past 12 months
 - 5 (outside, couch, shelter, short term, rent)
 - 3 (outside, couch, shelter, short term, PSH/Harm)
 - 1 (outside, couch, shelter, PSH/Harm/ rent)
 - 1 (outside, shelter, short term, PSH/Harm/rent)
 - 1 (outside, couch, shelter, PSH/Harm, hospital)
 - 1 (outside, couch, shelter short term, family)
- 3 people stayed in 6 types of dwellings in the past 12 months
 - 1 (outside, couch, shelter, short term, PSH/Harm, rent)
 - 01 (outside, couch, shelter, short term, PSH/Harm, jail)
 - 1 (outside, couch, shelter, short term, rent, hospital)

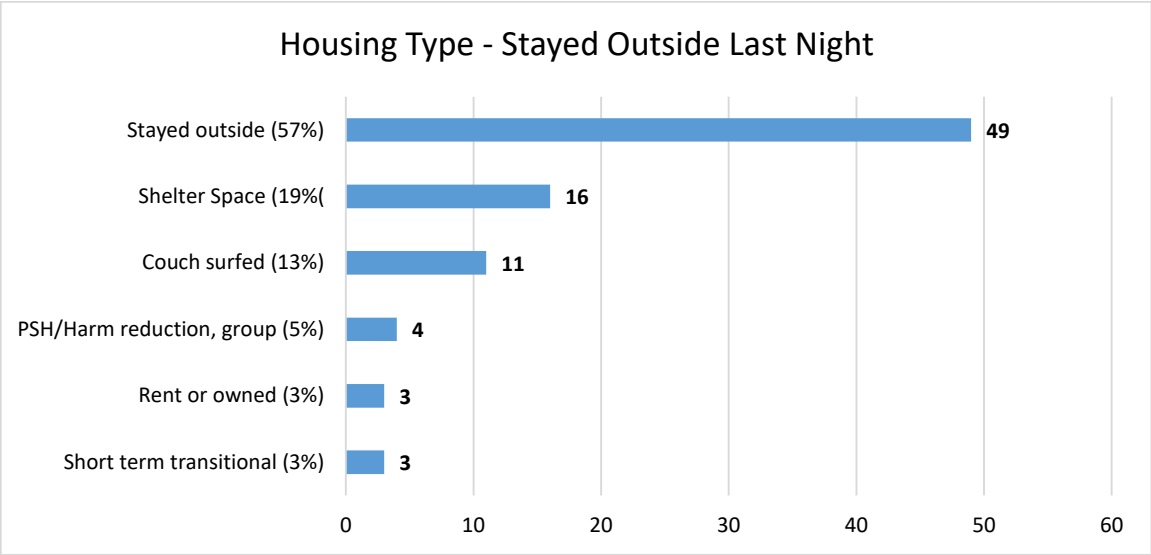
Participants were also asked about the portion of the past 12 months that they had stayed outside. The majority who offered a timeframe for staying outside (57%; n=40), had been outside for less than half of the year.

⁴ PSH/Harm: Permanent Supportive Housing or housing related to harm reduction programs

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Forty-nine (49) persons (57%) who stayed outside in the past 12 months also stayed outside the night preceding data collection.

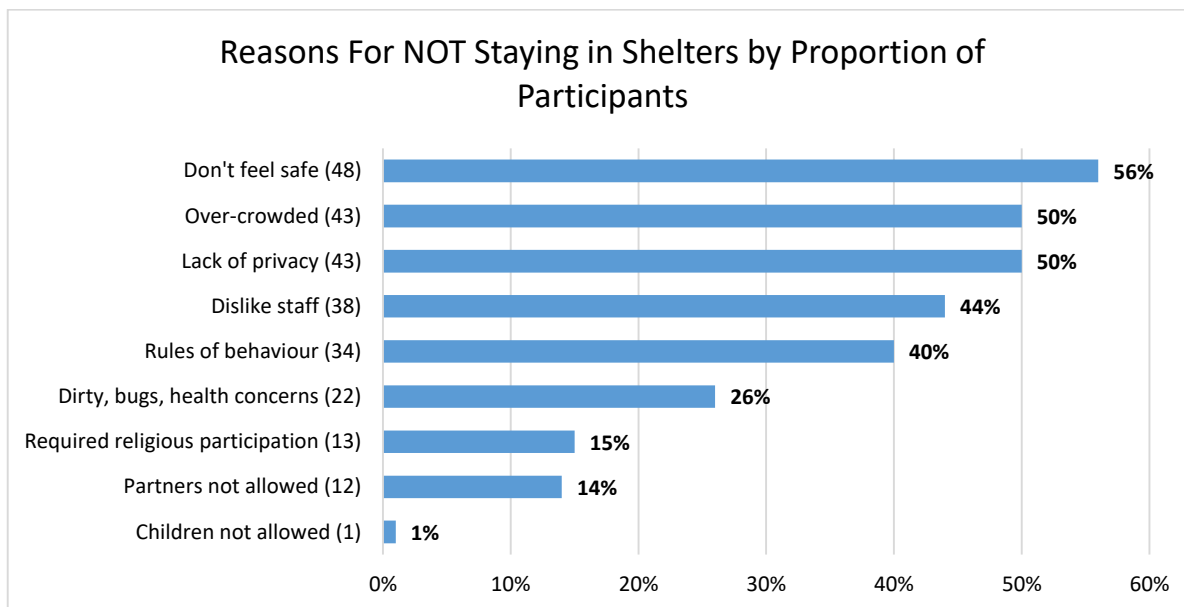


Decisions about Staying in Shelters

In the survey, participants were asked whether staying outside was a choice. Two in three (67%) said that they did not prefer to stay outside. The remaining 33% preferred staying outside.

The principal reasons that participants do not stay in shelters is that they did not feel safe, and that shelters are overcrowded. Note that with the final two reasons shown on the table below, the low numbers reflect that very few participants had a partner or children with them. There were no significant differences in reasons for not staying in shelters by gender or Indigenous versus non-Indigenous participants. Females were more likely than males to say that the reason they did not stay in shelters was because they could not stay with their partners.

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Outreach and agency workers discussed their clients' experiences of trying to seek shelter space as a negative experience that makes some unhoused stay outside.

They're sick of it so they just say 'forget it'. They're being robbed, people are screaming and yelling, the smells, the urine, the poop, and everything else that goes on in there. The bugs, the way they are spoken to by the staff, the other community members that are having mental health issues or psychosis. They don't get sleep in there. The mat program they had was terrible. The Humane Society is a lot more kind with the animals.

They are often treated badly (at shelters). Sometimes their things are 'lost' when stored at agencies. They are continuously told to move. They often don't get what they want or need.

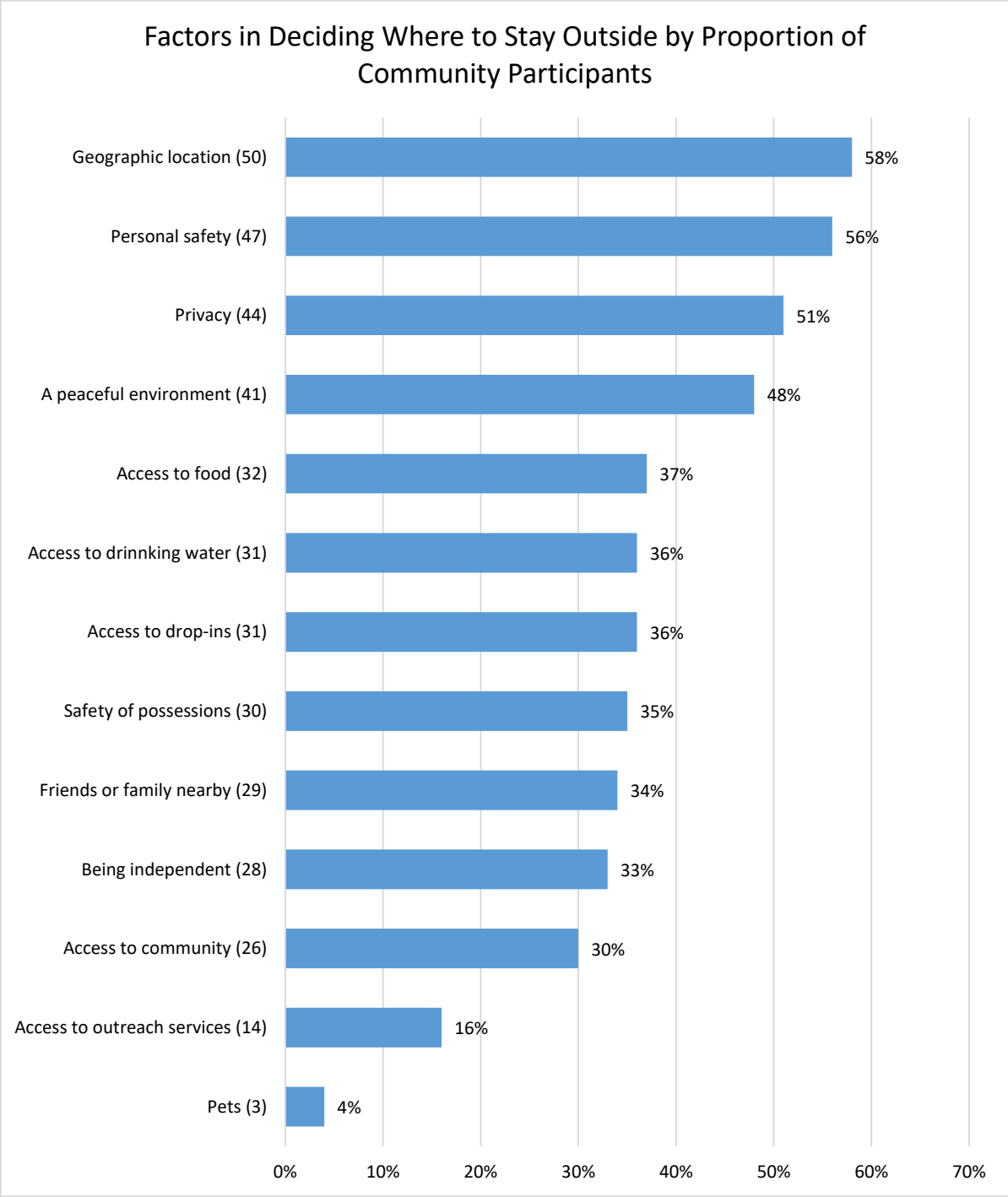
Community participants noted reasons that they do not feel safe in shelters: *I don't know who is around if I fall asleep; Outside line-ups are dangerous – Staff stays inside; Too much yelling and screaming.* Others cited their need for privacy: *My addiction and PTSD make it hard to stay; People weird me out at shelters. You are surrounded by people but outside you get your space.* Although friends or family nearby was not cited by many, this theme arose in conversations. Attachment goes beyond partners and spouses: *I want to stay with my family outside; I worry about my Mom and stay outside so I can be with her.*

Choosing Outside Spaces

Community members were asked which factors they considered when deciding where to stay outside. The most common consideration cited by more than half of respondents, was geographic location. With no transportation, most must walk to access services, *(I) couldn't make it to the location and had no transportation.*

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Significant differences related to gender were found in two areas. Males were more likely to cite being independent as a factor in their decision about where to stay outside at 41% compared with 16% for females. Males were also more likely to say that access to food was important at 45% compared with 19% for females. Regarding Indigenous or non-Indigenous status, Indigenous community members were significantly more likely to say that having a peaceful environment outside was a factor in their choice at 68% compared with 40% for non-Indigenous. There is more than 95% surety that the above-named differences are not due to chance.



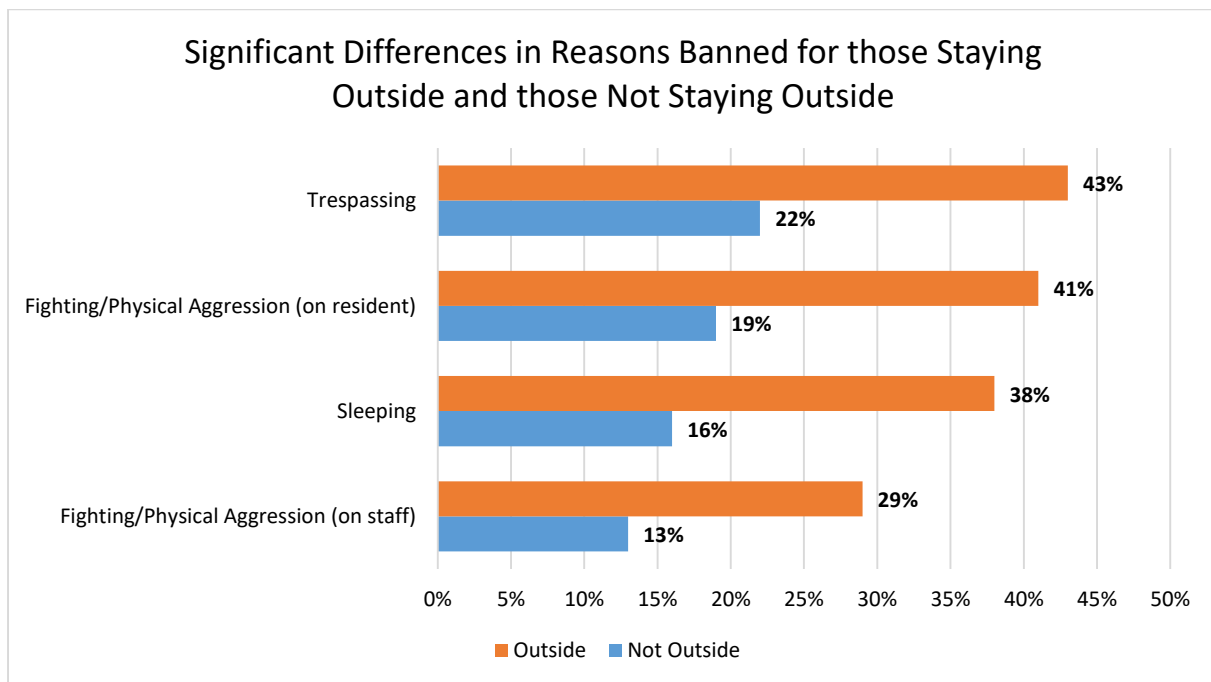
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Banning: Significant Differences Between Those Who Stayed Outside and Those Who Did Not

An analysis was done to determine if there were statistically significant differences between the banning experiences of individuals who had lived outside in the past 12 months and those who had not. This section contains only the data and outcomes for the questions where such a difference was found. Significant differences are reported only where there is 95% or greater surety that these differences are not due to chance. The following table suggests that housing people would result in reduced banning.

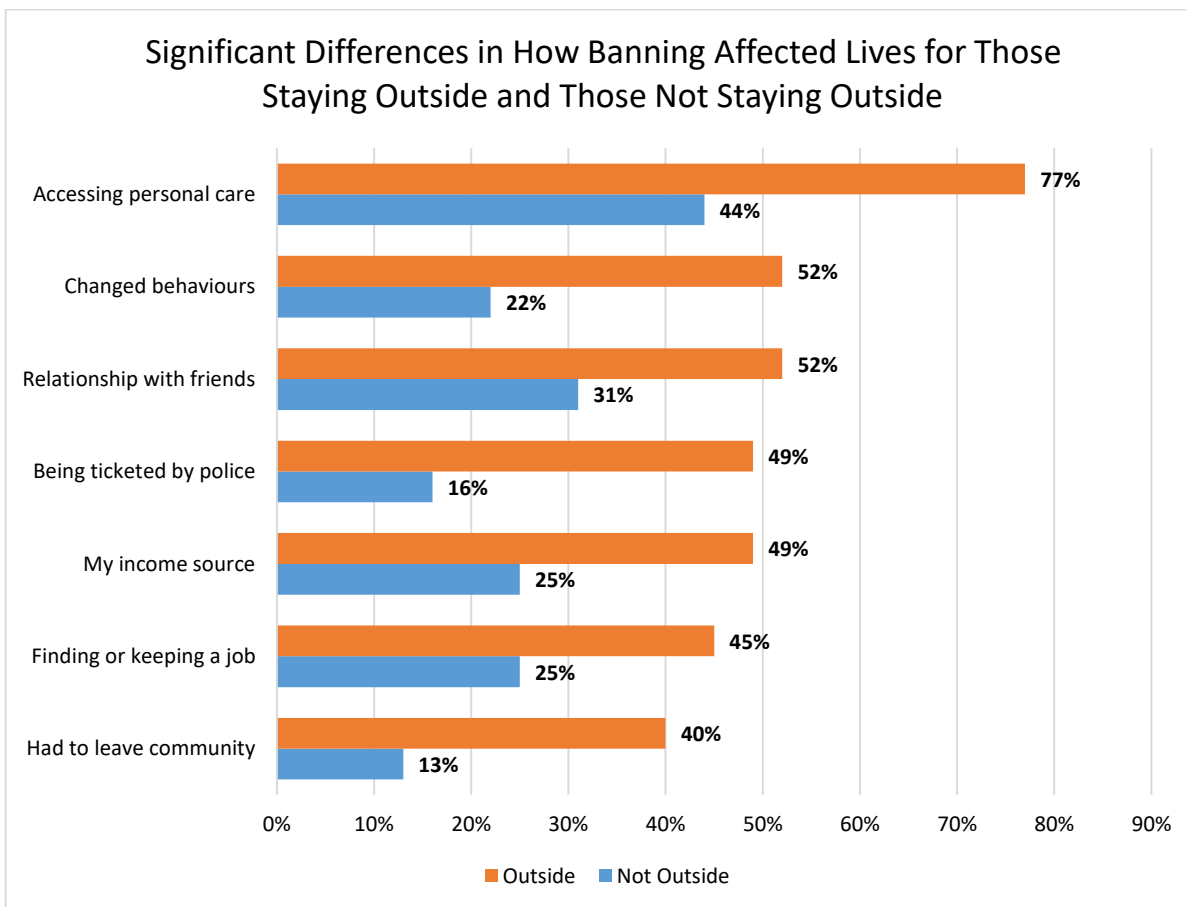
There were four reasons for which participants who had stayed outside in the past 12 months were significantly more likely to be banned than other participants. These reasons were trespassing, fighting/physical aggression against another community member, sleeping, and fighting/physical aggression against staff. There was also a significant difference in the number of places those who had stayed outside were banned from with a mean of 3.81 places for those staying outside and 2.80 for those not staying outside.

They're being banned from all these facilities and resources but they're also being moved every day from their own land. They're banned from the grass so they've got to move, then they're banned from this and the next day they come along and they're banned from this place if they just put up their home. They're being banned from trying to just survive outside. Get up and move. And there's no heart involved when they're moving people.



Participants were asked to consider which areas of their lives had been affected by banning. While all survey participants typically faced a range of negative effects from being banned, those who had stayed outside suffer significantly more than those who do not. These differences are statistically significant as the $p < .05$, meaning that we are at 95% sure that these differences are not due to chance. The following table shows the areas where these differences are the greatest.

Staying Outside is Not a Preference: Homelessness in Edmonton



The proportion of participants banned from stores was significantly higher for those who live outside where a majority (53%) had been banned from stores in the past 12 months, compared with their counterparts who had not stayed outside at 31%. A contributing factor may be that those who stay outside do not have available places for self-care and hygiene or to wash their clothes. One participant talked about her efforts to look clean and tidy:

People say “Why are homeless people SO clean, they live outside, how can that be?” I said “well we don’t want to look the part when we’re trying to change our lives around.”

Outreach workers from both human service agencies as well as mutual aid groups talked about the effects of banning in the unhoused community.

People are not able to look after themselves. People are literally begging for a place to stay. A man who was banned three years ago and went to jail and did his time, is still banned from the shelters. He says “I am going to die out here”.

Lifetime bans where people cannot get in anywhere and they are banned from everywhere. When you are adding all this mental health stuff in there and there is no solution being offered, there is no service, they are getting penalized for their behavioural issues. Where is the help for that? People are acting out for a reason.

Staying Outside is Not a Preference: Homelessness in Edmonton

Staying Outside is Not a Preference

Staying outside is difficult for community members because their struggle to meet their daily needs often takes all their time and energy leaving them unable to take steps to better their lives. Staying outside robs people of sleep, and prolonged periods of sleep further limit ones' capacity. Outside of the homeless community there may be the perception that staying outside is a choice, however, people choosing to stay outside do so because they see it as safer and a better option than staying in a shelter. In other words, while community participants want to be housed, they often would rather stay outside than go to a shelter.

Community participants were asked what could be done to make their lives better while staying outside. Many stated that they did not want to answer the question because an answer would mean that they would accept staying outside. The logical and humane solution is housing that works with the needed supports to stay housed but, given the limited number of housing opportunities, it is a reality that many people will be staying outside for some time to come.

Focus group discussions including an Outreach Worker brought attention to a very small number of individuals who are not ready to navigate the systems that would move them to housing.

(There is) a community of military and RCMP veterans who will not come out of the River Valley. They are in the survival mode as real life is too much even with free mental health coverage.

Many voiced their weariness with waiting and wanting to be housed but then not being able to gain housing or the supports to maintain housing. Community participants expressed feelings of hopelessness as they are moved with nowhere to go, only to be moved again in a matter of days.

We are recyclable people.

Give us a place to go.

Offer a solution as to where to go so we are not shuffled around.

Staff and outreach workers talked about how difficult staying outside is for community members.

They hear the word 'no' every second person so after a while it's got to wear you out and like 'Somebody.. help me.... please! So, they get this frustration and it comes out in an unhealthy way. If someone would just take the time to sit and listen to what they have to say and they can maybe compromise. A lot of the times they just get shooed away. "We've already told you get out, just get out." I do hear a lot of community members say they feel like they're treated like second class citizens and less than other people when they are trying to stay at the shelter. And they're mad because they're already dealing with their whole lives outside, they're in survival mode constantly outside and then they come inside, and they're treated not to the best they should be.

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Staff shared stories to illustrate the frustration and desperation they witness when trying to support individuals who stay outside. An outreach worker shared a story of trying to help a client attain housing and by the fourth unsuccessful phone call this client was swearing at the outreach worker and telling her to get lost.

When they are not getting what they want or need they can just explode. It's that "I'm trying to do the right thing and then the system is just bearing down on me" and that just caused an explosion out of nowhere... so they just don't know how to cope and deal sometimes from trauma and everything they've been through.

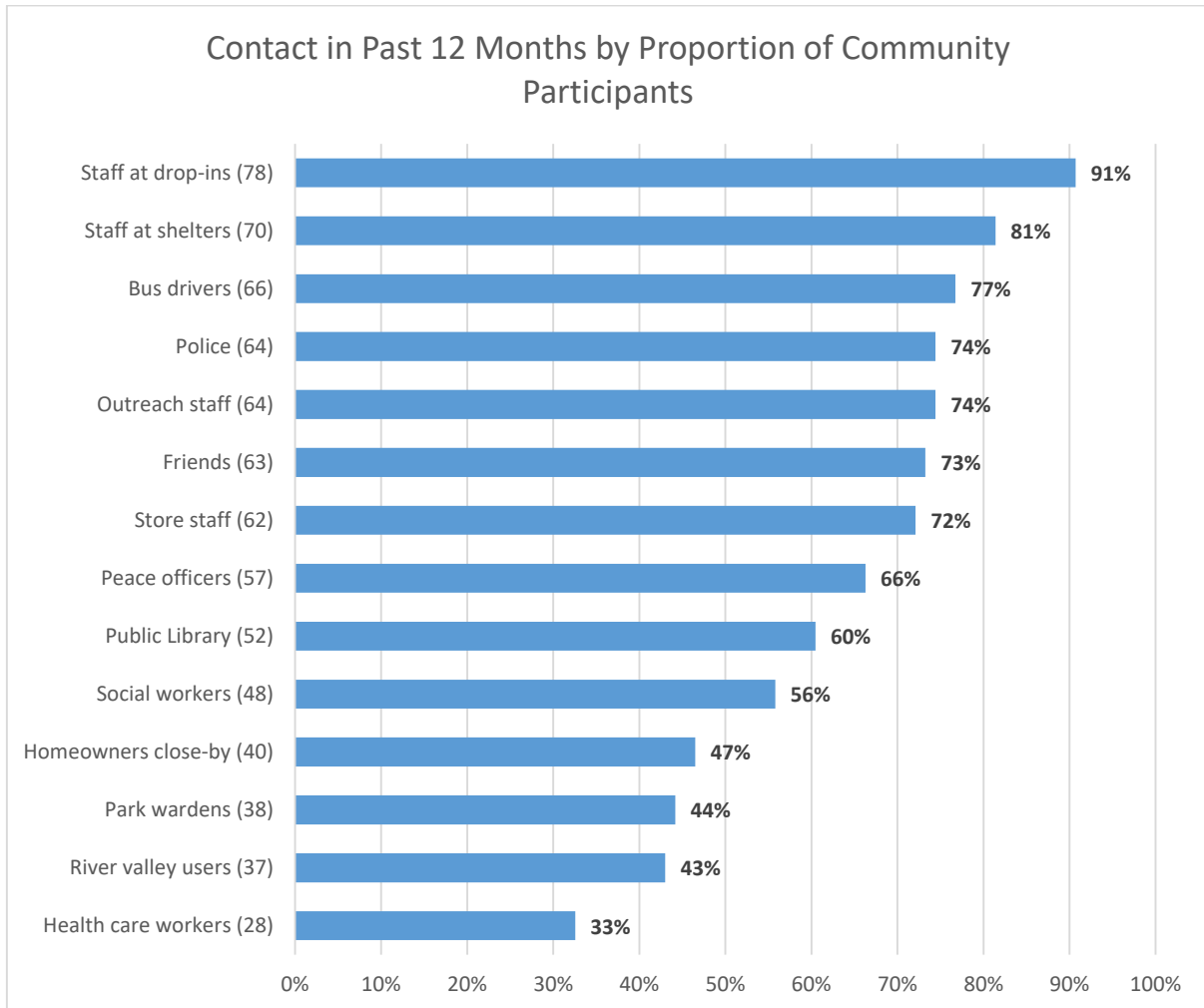
*A lot of people the only way they've gotten things is losing their sh*t. That's their learned behaviour.*

Community Contacts and Relationships

Community participants were asked who they had contact within the past 12 months, and then asked to assess the quality of their contacts within each category. These assessments of quality of contact were done by category, making it impossible to assess the quality of individual interactions. For example, community participants found that offering a single assessment of relationship with police officers was difficult as they often talked about having both positive and negative interactions, depending on the individual officer.

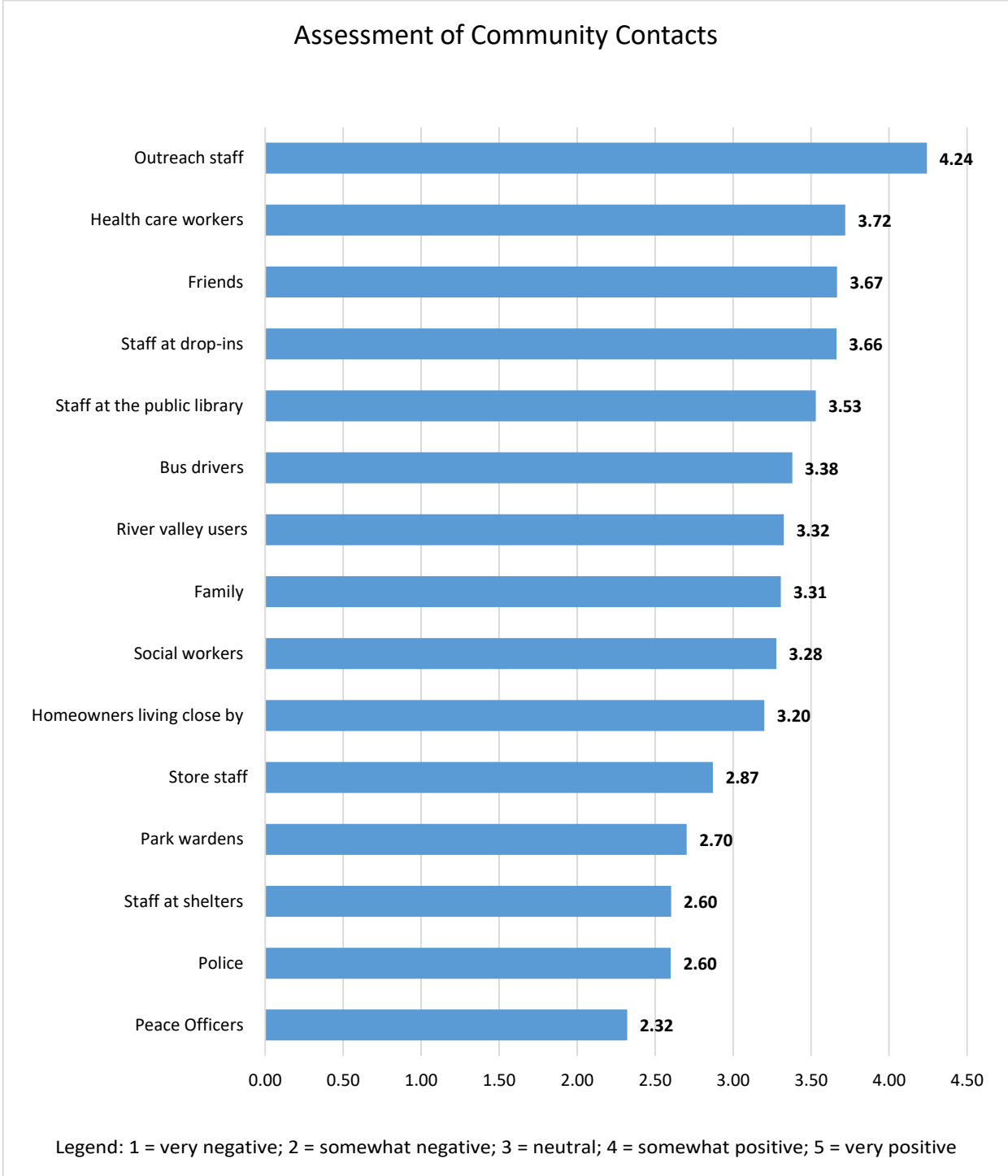
A large majority of community participants had contact with staff at drop-ins (91%; n=78) or shelters (81%; n=70). It is important to note that the least frequented categories have small numbers because not all community participants would have had a reason to make those contacts.

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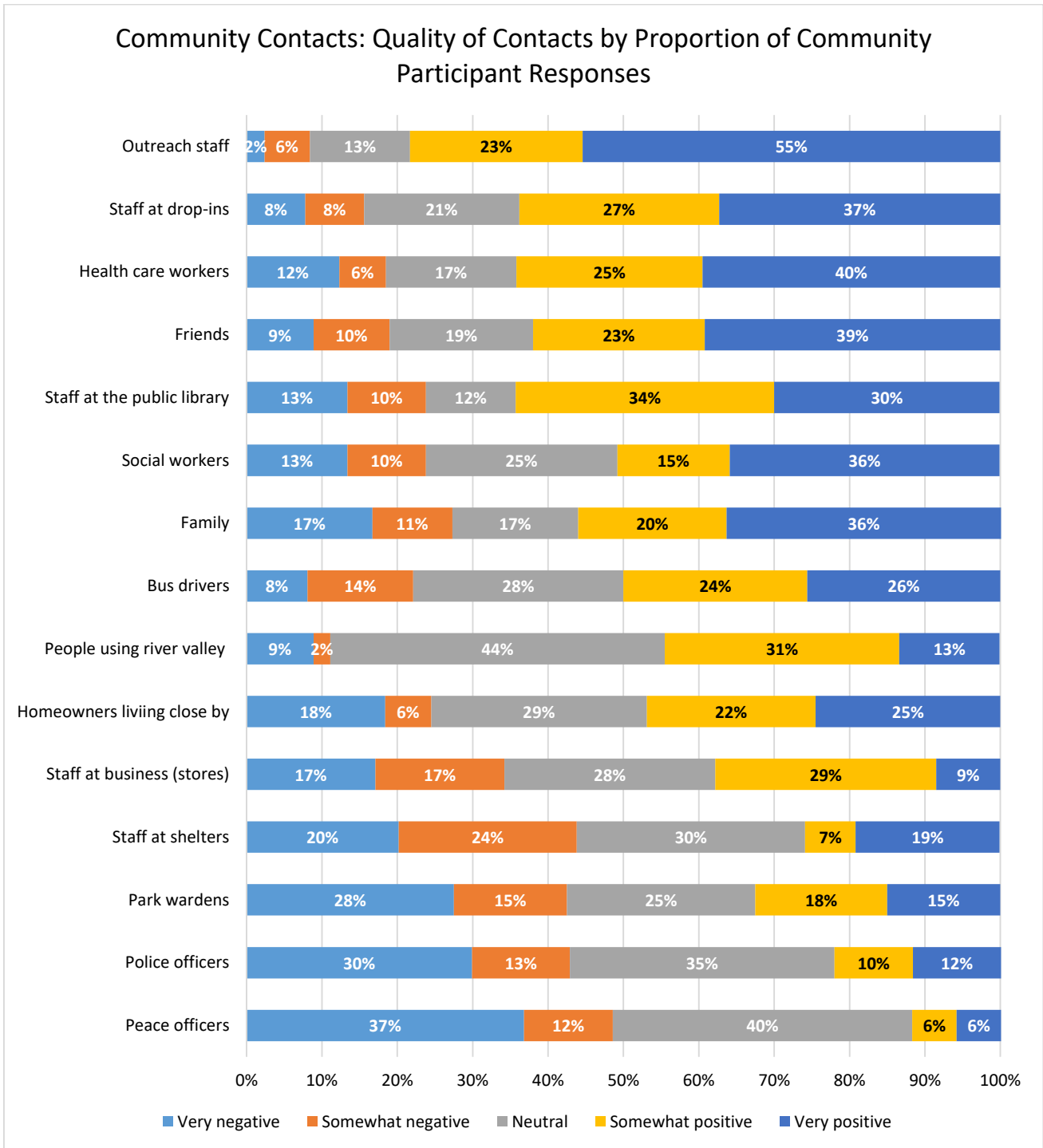


Using a Likert scale of 1 to 5 where 1 means *very negative*, and 5 means *very positive*, community participants were asked to rate the quality of their contacts. Community participants ranked the quality of contact with Outreach Staff the highest at a mean score of 4.24, between *somewhat positive* and *very positive*. On the low end of the spectrum, Peace and Police Officer contacts were the most negative with mean scores of 2.32 and 2.60 respectively, between *somewhat negative* and *neutral*.

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Staying Outside is Not a Preference: Homelessness in Edmonton



Another way to look at the quality of contacts, that gives insight into the range of responses, is to consider the frequencies. This examination shows the nuances in the proportions in each category of assessment. For example, not only do Outreach staff have the highest average assessment rating, but only 2% scored the lowest rating.

Staying Outside is Not a Preference: Homelessness in Edmonton

Outreach workers talked about the importance of relationships and the individual differences in relationships with community participants and enforcement officers.

There's lots of emotional support people. Community is everything for our folks.

I've met some good police officers and peace officers. It seems they do have a heart with an authoritative background.

Police or other enforcement do not understand; they do not spend enough time with homeless people.

Let other people handle the move such as outreach or community support workers. Police are nasty.

Qualitative Data: Diverse Perspectives

Addressing and responding to the needs of the homeless is complex and multi-faceted. While the solution to homelessness is housing and needed supports, the reality is that the shortage of affordable housing means the focus of care is on temporal supports. The goal of all who provide services to the homeless is to help people to have a better life, however, some service providers are at liberty to focus only on the needs of the homeless while others work within the larger context, considering the broader community.

Enforcement Officers are challenged to respond to those who are homeless, while navigating conflicting priorities as they serve all Edmontonians. They must enforce City Bylaws, adhere to Occupational Health and Safety (OHS) regulations, and follow Union regulations. The recent Recovery Oriented Housing Model report places wellness for all under the umbrella of safety (Task Force, 2022, p.5).

There can be no wellness without safety. Yet ideological debates have led to encampments taking root in communities, in which criminals are preying on vulnerable people experiencing homelessness. The knock-in effects are rising crime, social disorder, random acts of violence, traumatized staff, ruined business and destroyed lives in surrounding areas – and, troubling, people who need assistance going without it, as a result of fear and victimization.

The Social Development Branch within the City of Edmonton partners and collaborates with community to support and enable citizen-centric approaches to create an Edmonton for All. The Branch strives to ensure that every person, regardless of gender, age, ability, or place of origin, is engaged, included, and afforded equitable opportunities to thrive in their community.

Human service agencies provide supports to those in need. They face the complexity of helping people to meet basic immediate needs such as feeding and hygiene while helping clients work towards better living situations and more stable lives. They build strong communities by addressing social and health-based inequities facing low-income and/or vulnerable neighbourhoods.

Mutual Aid groups comprise concerned members of the community who want to help the homeless, many of whom responded during the pandemic when services were overwhelmed. They often comprise people who were recently housed or have experience with homelessness. While their principal role is to check-in on people and hand out needed items such as food, water, clothing, and harm reduction supplies, they often find themselves in advocacy and monitoring roles.

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Homeless community members may live in all areas of Edmonton, but congregate more heavily in the downtown core where services are most readily available. Many transition in and out of housing, spreading some of their time over different types of temporary or transitional dwellings, or couch surf as opportunities arise. Those who live in tents or makeshift shelters are nomads, moving locations as required by others. They do not have a permanent place to go.

The common thread that serves to strengthen and support the most positive and helpful approaches, is respectful communication and relationship building. An understanding of the positions of others, whether it be community members who live in poverty or experience homelessness, or the larger Edmonton population, is necessary to build empathy and understanding so approaches for the betterment of all may be employed. Throughout this report we see examples of the importance of relationship and trust.

Homeless People are Not All the Same

Homeless people do not constitute a homogeneous group. While they may share the condition of homelessness, the similarities tend to end there. The wide range of ages, educational attainment, and gender differences found in the earlier data, as well as diversity of backgrounds and reasons that community participants became homeless, attest to their differences. Decisions of where to stay outside are also based on individual situations, priorities, and needs. Younger community participants, especially females, were more likely to stay south of the river where services were fewer, and they felt safer. Community participants with mobility issues were more likely to locate closer to services than others. Some community participants chose to stay in isolated areas while others felt safer being in communal spaces. For some, living communally means safety, having someone look after your belongings when you are away, and working together to access needed items. For others, living alone means being able to maintain better surroundings and being away from potential violence.

You can't let anyone know where you are actually... because they bring more people with them, and they tell other people, and more people show up. I've had the camp for a year and a half in the same spot and I've never been bothered there. Nobody has ever told me to move from it. I keep it clean and neat, and I keep it quiet there. I don't let anybody come there. I don't let people come there and start drinking, I just don't allow it. And I gave it to my dad so my Dad's going to stay there because I just got housed and I was on the list for four years.

Complex Health Needs

More than half of the community participants indicated that they were *very* or *somewhat unhealthy*. Given the list of health challenges they experienced, it is likely that the proportion of those in poor health is higher than reported, as their concentration on survival may make them ignore health problems. Trauma was the most reported health challenge. Second was addiction and/or substance use, which likely is an adaptation to cope with the struggle of trauma, mental health issues, poverty, and homelessness. Community participants referred to their substance use in this way. Furthermore, the complexity of multiple health challenges with few supports complicates life for the homeless.

Homeless community members were significantly less likely to receive treatment for health challenges. It is important to note that although community participants gave health care workers the second highest quality of relationship, they were the least likely to have had contact with health care workers.

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Trauma and mental health issues may keep individuals from seeking out care and/or navigating the processes to receive care, leading to those most in need being the least likely to receive help. Not having an address further exacerbated the long processes of accessing funding or care. While access to emergency mental health care was often not timely, community participants found that when they could access care, they were treated with respect and kindness.

Outreach teams were given the highest ratings in quality of contacts by community participants. They described the compassion and care utilized when linking clients to health services and advocating for those who need help. They described being stretched beyond capacity as there are not enough feet on the ground to respond to all the needs.

Agency staff discussed mental health needs of community members.

Our biggest obstacle is the mental health piece. A lot of the times when we do see violent behaviours it is a direct result of mental health. Are they a) able to access those services? and b) willing? A high proportion of our clients have a lot of aversion to mental health and the hospital system and accessing care in that way so it can be difficult to set and assert boundaries around that when they are not ready or in a place to engage but that's directly where the behaviour is coming from.

While Assured Income for the Severely Handicapped (AISH) is not within the City's purview, it is important to note that individuals suffer due to the loss of their AISH funding. On several occasions, people shared that they had lost their AISH and were not able to navigate being reinstated. The daily struggle to stay with ones' tent or dwelling and protect ones' belongings, access hygiene, and obtain food, all while dealing with disability and/or health challenges, made it challenging for some to keep appointments for reapplication support, thus, lengthening their time without supports. For these reasons, several people using walkers or wheelchairs found themselves in very vulnerable and unsafe outdoor conditions. Once homeless, with no address, the transiency of being moved, and the difficulty in getting to agencies for application support, the journey back to AISH is exceedingly difficult.

To be back on disability - I applied 3 times and now have been off disability for 6-7 months...This made me homeless.

A sentiment widely heard in the larger community is that homelessness could be easily solved if everyone *Just get a job!* If it were this easy to solve homelessness, the problem would only minimally exist. While getting and maintaining a job is made more difficult while homeless, complex health needs and their underlying experiences and histories further complicate the issue.

Needs to Make Life Outside Better

Suggestions to make life better when staying outside centered on basic needs, with the main focus on having a safe place to go where you would not have to move. Other suggestions included shelter from the elements, access to fire, toilets, showers, food, water, tents, and warmth. Further ideas included medical care, social support, housing workers, mental health support, income, and transition to housing. Some community participants talked about working with the neighbourhood to build better relationships and understanding. The importance and significance of fire for keeping warm, cooking, and as a sacred fire was noted by community participants.

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Many community participants discussed orderly camp sites as a strategy to be able to remain in their encampments longer, however without garbage bags and disposal sites, it is difficult to keep ones' space clean. Participant comments reflected a willingness to stay within certain parameters to show they respected the space they were in, and to reduce the negative interactions with City Enforcement. They also stated that the City could help them to maintain a clean and safer space by providing basic services in addition to garbage disposal such as a safe place for a fire, toilets, showers and potable water.

Relationships of Respect

Community participants stated that better relationships would improve their situations. Overall, they felt that better communication, clear rules, and consistent service would lead to better situations.

Take people aside and respect them. Treat them as you would like to be treated.

Be understanding and empathic instead of direct orders.

Come with compassion and a little empathy and dignity rather than "Get the F out of here".

Some community participants felt that relationships with those in authority had improved.

It has improved - now there is less harassment, whereas in the past my name was run daily. Now they come by only when there is a problem.

The officers are becoming more nice and not rude as they used to be.

Community participants also discussed how they work to co-exist in the community. Those who stay outside rated the quality of the contacts they had with people in the neighbourhood fairly positively. They also explained that they generally try to stay away from people living in the neighbourhood and felt a need for relationship building and understanding. As one outreach worker described:

It is often related to people around who want them to move, and conversations with neighbours would help.

Drug & Alcohol Consumption

Staying outside presents the dilemma of living ones' private life in public. While this situation means no private spaces or facilities for hygiene, it also means no private spaces to consume drugs or alcohol, often relied on to survive outdoor life. People who stay outside have very few to no private spaces, often leaving them in the situation of conducting activities that may not be acceptable in public spaces. Respondents talked about how humiliating it is to defecate outdoors and then to be ticketed when they had no other choice.

If you are homeless, where can you drink without getting fines or getting picked up? Instead of handing out tickets maybe give people a list of where they can go. Maybe there's a spot they can allow people to openly drink. Vodka keeps your innards warm in the winter.

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There should be more places like [agency name] because they let you in. They know you're drinking. So, if there's more places where people felt safe and they could actually drink... as long as you don't bring it into the building... they still talk with you, not support the alcohol but know the situation because people can't just quit drinking when they're homeless because that's the way they escape.

EPS Officers discussed how, when the weather is very cold, they may hold people overnight so that they will not freeze when they have nowhere else to go.

In those incidents it becomes extremely difficult, especially during the winter months when we can't just let somebody go into the frigid night if they have nowhere to go especially if they're in an intoxicated state. So, it becomes extremely difficult to try and find somewhere for them to go and that is where we end up a lot of times. It's holding people under 1152 under the Indian Liquor Act, so public intoxication. And we expose ourselves to a tremendous of risk by doing that... by holding people in our holding cells just because they're drunk in public. And that is NOT a solution at all. All that ends up happening is that we wait until they're sober and then we kick them out of the door in the morning and it's a terrible, vicious cycle. That particular piece of the conversation we need to figure out a solution to. We need to have that discussion.

Moving Encampments

Encampments are entities that begin, grow, change, and are dismantled or moved, only to emerge in another place if one was not fortunate enough to be housed. All who have a role in encampments from residency, supporting the residents, and those who must manage safety and enforce bylaws must deal with competing priorities while working with the community of the homeless and the housed. Bylaws and policies serve as procedural guidelines to ensure community safety and well-being. Although intended for the safety of all, they often leave the homeless negatively affected and further marginalized with few options to fulfill their basic needs.

The process of moving encampments is complex. Most difficult is the hopelessness of having nowhere to go when told to move on. The logistics of moving may make it impossible to take one's belonging with them. Respondents talked about being given little warning and not having the ability to move their belongings without help. The most prevalent issue was that people are told to move and not given any choices of places to go. Many who stay outside shared stories of constantly being displaced every 24-48 hours.

Being moved means no one knows where we are, and we have to wait for services because we cannot be found.

Give someone time for preparation. You can't uproot somebody who has no next place.

The personal possessions of homeless people are in-fact their possessions. Confiscating, destroying, or failing to return them after storing them, is understood as theft by community members. It is also important to note that if people do not have their essential items, such as identification and medications, with them at all times, they may be lost when their tents are removed.

Don't throw our property in the garbage. Do not throw our carts away... I have no safe place to put my backpack. Do not take our tents.

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Community participants explained that some agencies have a policy of storing personal items for a short period of time when someone receives a ban. Participants shared stories of items often being lost which is especially difficult with medications. Several participants described going back to their doctor or a pharmacy to get more medication and being flagged as drug-seeking and accused of selling their pills. Not having prescribed medications led to further problems. One community participant described how her behaviour in court was negatively influenced by not being able to take her prescribed medication. This situation made her unable to present herself well at court.

Community participants also talked about how having a disability makes moving more difficult and how they would appreciate help and consideration.

Be less aggressive and help those who are physically disabled to find a better spot. Some people are not able to pack up fast and often the officers would end up throwing out their stuff.

Bylaws & Policies

A focus group discussion was held with City of Edmonton (COE) staff that are involved in the response to individuals staying outside. COE respondents described the many reasons that encampments are moved with the most common being that they meet the criteria to be classified as high risk. City staff also provided insight into the liability encampments represent as well as the applicable Bylaws that they, as agents of the city, are required to enforce.

The reason why we move people is because there is a Parkland Bylaw 2202⁵ and it says that while on parkland people shall not build a structure whether temporary or permanent and there are other things in the bylaw about having a fire unattended or disturbing the natural areas so ultimately the reason why people are moved is because of that bylaw. The swiftness in which they are moved depends on the level of risk that an encampment has. The criteria revolve around size and type, whether there are crime or public safety issues or environmental impacts to the area. The higher risk the encampment the quicker they will be moved.

The foremost reason people are moved from encampments is for violence or the perception that there could be violence. That is usually affiliated to weapons, gang members, or number of encampments... Eight structures in one location is deemed to be high risk. There are also a bunch of other reasons we could associate as high risk such as playground, blocking a roadway, attached to infrastructure such as a fence or a building, open fires. Those are the different reasons that we consider it an automatic high risk so then we can close it down immediately or within 3 days. I can't remember the last time we closed one down immediately. We're always trying to give notice and connect folks and get them looped into that group that need help. That's a very short answer to a very complex scenario.

As soon as you start to provide necessities like that you assume occupier's liability⁶ which means if we provide pot-a-potties or showers or even if we give them garbage bags and things to clean up and something happens while they are sleeping on parkland. For example, if we provided a port-a-potty and then someone overdoses and there is a fatality the City assumes occupier's liability because we are essentially encouraging, people through those provision of basic needs, to stay. And so, if someone died their family could theoretically sue the City because they'll say

⁵ City of Edmonton Bylaw 2202 - Parkland Bylaw (Consolidated on February 22, 2021)

⁶ Occupiers' Liability Act, RSA 2000, c O-4. <https://www.canlii.org/en/ab/laws/stat/rsa-2000-c-o-4/latest/rsa-2000-c-o-4.html>

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"You had this bylaw for people not to camp and then you provided port-a-potties and so you're essentially encouraging them to stay."

Biohazard Issues

City staff talked about how the longer an encampment is in one spot the more damage, the more risk, the more biohazard, the more clean-up work, and the more cost.

The longer an encampment is in one spot the more damage that might occur to parkland to the area that it's inhabiting. Also, the more complaints from the neighbours. They will generally increase in size that will bring more biohazard in and more occupants, more tents. It will also cost a lot more manpower, time, and resources to remove encampments as soon as they start getting bigger, so we try to prevent them before they become too big or become tent cities.

Community Relationships

The experiences of moving people from where they are staying outside, including the procedures used and the dynamics around the process were discussed by all who participated in this research; from those who stay outside, to those who work and volunteer supporting them, to those employed to protect and serve the communities that homeless people frequent. This topic yielded a great diversity of perspectives; both within and across these groups. COE representatives, for example, reported that they no longer issue tickets and that the slashing of tents is not a part of their practice, however, community members and mutual aid workers reported that these practices are current.

While in some cases those who provide specific services and support to the homeless feel supported by the officers and wardens who enforce city bylaws that are designed to keep the city clean, limit city liability and promote feelings of safety in the general population, there are many times when their approaches and agendas clash.

Edmonton Police Officers talked about the importance of developing relationships to have more successful interactions when moving people, realizing that when they do their job, they are often unable to offer alternatives.

For the most part it's displacement where we're pushing people on. We realize that... and it's the ugly truth and we see just move them somewhere else and then we see the same person in the coming days and weeks.

The high-risk encampment teams over the last two summers now have really helped develop those relationships and they've really become the subject matter experts and dealing with the same folks every day and developing those relationships and it's all about how we treat people. The people in the high-risk encampment teams, the two of them, are hand picked because they are experienced members that understand the landscape and also understand a lot of the struggles that these folks are facing. That's what it's all about, it's developing those relationships, so we don't have to use force on someone, we don't have to physically remove them from their tent and throw their stuff in the garbage. That's the last thing we want. We realize that these people are down and out, and they need what we can do to steer them in the right direction, if possible. Some people also just choose to live this way. There are some that that's the brutal truth, is they want nothing to do with any resources and then as soon as winter hits they're going to go back to where they're from, to their community wherever that is and that happens a lot through the winter as well. So, it's a very complex issue as I'm sure you are seeing through your conversations.

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Community participants indicated that some of their interaction with enforcement has recently improved but that approaches are different depending on who is moving you.

*I've been at camps where people have said "It's ok, take a day or two to pack your stuff and get going but I need you out by Friday" and I've seen cops tell people "You've got 6 seconds to grab your sh*t and get out of here!"*

Mutual Aid workers discussed their experiences when providing assistance to the homeless, and their observations of police and peace officers' treatment of the homeless.

We see people being abused regularly. When the police see us, their abusive attitude changes.

We had interactions with police officers and peace officers both where they do not realize we are there, and they are being abusive to people. As soon as they see a privileged person walk into their point of view their attitude changes.

We walk around by the LRT line, and we have had unmarked police cars sitting there harassing us because we were interacting with the unhoused. They are sitting there, staring at us or full-on interacting... We asked them to move off the sidewalk so we could get past with our wagons, and they said, "You can go around". I asked if they were asking us to walk on the street with traffic with our wagons into traffic, "Can't you back up half a meter". Their response was "Are you trying to cause trouble?"... If they are treating us like that, we know how they are treating our community members.

Outreach workers shared how difficult it is to build relationships and connect people to services when they are constantly being moved. They ask people where they think they might be camping the next day and often end up spending a lot of time locating them.

I go tent to tent to tent to tent and see if I can find that person that way.

They also described how the work of connecting homeless people to resources such as Income Support or housing teams is severely compromised when something as basic as not being able to locate a person, when their income support phone call finally comes in, can easily send someone back to the bottom of the list.

It makes our job SO much harder.

People constantly fall through the cracks. It is hard to help people when they are moved every few days.

When I ask people "how many times have you been told by the police in the past 6 months to move along?" the numbers are usually like 120. It could be higher but that is the highest number I can put into my computer.

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Dismantling or Moving Encampments

The matter of dismantling or moving encampments is contentious and there are many discrepancies related to understanding of and reporting this phenomenon. Even the terminology is widely dissented and value laden, with some referring to *tent slashing* or *tent cutting* while others refer to more generally to *tearing down* or *dismantling*.

Community participants reported that their tents were destroyed by enforcement teams. City of Edmonton staff explained that tents are only removed after a site has been vacated and that tents may have to be cut open in order to protect the safety of workers as contents are considered bio-hazards. They asserted that tents are not cut for the purpose of making them unusable.

Our team has been accused of slashing tents in the middle of the night so that the next day it is unusable. We have taken a knife to a tent but only in the process of cleaning it up. We're not going to squeeze in through the door. We cut it out from the outside because there's usual hazards in there. The physical act of slashing a tent I wouldn't say happens, but we do cut tents down or we'll use knives to cut down if they're strung up with strings.

With some regularity we have private citizens that will remove encampments or dismantle them and just throw them on the ground beside our trail system and then the expectation is our workers will come and just pick them up and they know if they do that, that will happen but that interrupts the whole clean-up process and the outreach process but that does occur.

The clean-up crew only works in the encampment after it's been vacated and all items remaining are considered abandoned and potentially contaminated and therefore, we remove everything. We wouldn't just slash a tent and then walk away and then come back later. We will slash it and then, I shouldn't say 'slash', we will dismantle it and haul it away as part of our process.

*There are also some citizen groups that are a little bit p*ssed and a little bit frustrated and they are blaming all of their problems on homeless people. So, a lot of them are taking matters into their own hands. We have had incidents where we've have been altercations between citizens and those experiencing homelessness too where we've had to respond to. That is a possibility, I'm not saying it's all that but it's also part of that conversation.*

Mutual Aid workers shared alternate experiences related to possession removals.

Everything is thrown out when encampments are taken down. They actually cut the tents so they cannot be re-used. Slashing still takes place. Community members are taking footage with their own cameras.

So many people say these things are not happening, but they happen all the time. Police, transit and police officers say it is not them, but tents are going down every week, so who is it?

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Location Choices

Community participants and Peace Officers both noted differences in the levels of drugs and violence on the north versus the south side of the river with a marked concentration of these problems in the downtown core. Some community participants described how staying on the south side of the river means fewer services but also less drugs and violence. In contrast, the north side is noted for being more crowded and violent but with more services.

A lot of times what we hear from the clients that are in the river valley is that they want to stay away from the amount of drugs and the amount of violence that is downtown. We see signs of that less out in the river Valley as opposed to the core.

Specifically, young women and/or those with physical disabilities and mobility issues often have concerns about finding places that are safe to sleep and protecting their possessions. One young woman talked about staying on the southside for safety, but even there being reluctant to stay in a tent where she could not escape easily. Her place of safety was a spot under a bridge where she could run in several directions if threatened.

Ticketing

Outreach workers verified that tickets are still being issued at LRT stations and that their co-workers had been ticketed for loitering while trying to help people at the LRT stations, even though they provided identification. They also provided an example of a community member whose continued sleeping outside led to a warrant.

I just did one (a standardized assessment) for a lady that had been picked up 22 times over the winter for sleeping on the ground. It was at the point where it was now a warrant, and she did not know what to do. It's something that we experience often, especially with transit.

City staff explained that the ETS loitering bylaw was removed, however, when people began using the LRT stations as shelter, the bylaw was amended to a more general format to say one cannot use transit spaces inappropriately.

With ETS the loitering bylaw was removed a while ago and so people couldn't be removed from transit stations. Then, as a result of COVID and the decrease in ridership in transit stations as well as people's fear around congregate shelter, we saw more and more people using transit LRT stations as shelter. Nobody had any way to enforce against people using transit stations so they amended the bylaw again and it's more general now to say you can't use transit spaces inappropriately (the purpose of transit spaces is to go in and use transit to get to another destination). For a while there was no ability to enforce on loitering and now, we potentially could see that (the ticketing).

Community participants talked about being ticketed without a cause and being unable to pay outstanding tickets.

Often police ticket people only because they were called even though an offence is not evident.

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City staff shared information about the Community Outreach Transit Team (COTT)⁷ initiative and that the High-Risk Encampment Team had not written a ticket in almost two years.

Transit Peace Officers and Bent Arrow are working together in the Community Outreach Transit Team (COTT) so I think the city is trying to say "we know that this is not people's first choice of place to hang out" and so how can we respond and redirect people to more appropriate places with appropriate resources?

City staff who participated in the research were not in a position to respond to questions about current practices of loitering tickets and warrants.

Not anyone at this table can really speak to that (about certain occurrences with loitering tickets). I'm not sure if the people aren't paying the tickets if they are actually spending time in jail or not. I don't think those types of tickets go to warrant anymore.

Staying Housed

While attaining housing is a single accomplishment, staying housed takes long term effort and support. For those who have been homeless for some time, learning how to be housed may take additional efforts and supportive relationships. Additionally, those dealing with health and addiction issues may also need longer and more intense supports.

Landlords and support workers have a large role to play in building relationships of trust and understanding, realizing that steps to success are incremental.

With the right individual in the role, having the right training, a building manager can provide micro-interventions (such as informal advice, reminders or guidance) that support clients' other recovery-oriented supports and help them maintain their trajectory (Taskforce, 2022, p34).

Community participants offered suggestions as to how they could stay housed.

Clear understanding of the expectations and communication would help to stay housed. Being housed at permanent supportive housing with harm reduction and independent living is best.

Better landlords who understand our situation. Having rent money alone is not enough as I have been homeless my whole life.

Continuation of programs - I have two more months with [agency name] then I am done.

Community participants discussed the challenges of staying housed. They talked about running into problems with landlords. Offering accommodation to homeless friends often put housed individuals in jeopardy of eviction. Others who found it difficult to adjust to the *rules* of being housed found themselves in a cycle of housing and eviction, rendering them homeless, over and over again.

They expect you to stay isolated in that apartment by yourself. It's not a written rule, it's what they expect.

⁷ The COTT's team purpose is to build relationships and connect individuals within the transit system to community support and resources to increase safety and reduce harm.

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Whether the sentiment is balanced or not, some found themselves unable to cope with the rules around being housed and several community participants spoke about abuse at one particular housing facility.

It's semi-prison rules and we're not criminals so why are we getting semi-prison rules?... It doesn't make sense. I mean there's no rules when you live in your residence right? You have family visit. Would you have somebody who mortgaged your house tell you can't have them spend the night? I mean that's the abuse that's happening. And it's individual people, it's not usually a group of people. It's this one lady who runs these apartments and she's very abusive.

A mutual aid worker retold the words of a woman she encountered who felt that there was no hope of housing in her immediate future.

You have taken my sleeping bag, you have cut a hole in my tent, you have cut a hole in it and I have this little bag of clothes and my snack from this morning and I am going to go two blocks down and I am going to get harassed for being in a back alley by a woman who owns a building. It just doesn't end. There is no solution.

STAFFING

The challenges for staff working in drop-ins, shelters, or other agencies that support the homeless are great. This situation was exacerbated during COVID when increased regulations around infection prevention and control added to the complexity of service delivery. Jobs in these areas are generally not well paid, the turnover of staff is high, and even though there may be a structure for training, many employees are working without the tools to deal with day-to-day challenges of this front-line work. Furthermore, because these jobs typically do not pay well and are seen as entry level positions, staff may be starting their career, working on their own journey after being housed, or be newcomers to Canada.

A lot of the drop-ins are understaffed. You would have 200+ (sometimes pushing 300) on a given day in the winter and you have 4-5 staff looking after those people you don't have time to de-escalate a community member. And if you don't nip it in the bud, it escalates other community members and if you don't deal with that you will lose control of your setting.

We are coming from a situation where we had 62 people and 2 staff so there wasn't time to have these sit-down conversations. It was "if you hit someone, go."

There's a communal sense of justice. When an incident happens in the drop-in, everyone witnesses it. People will say: "If I did that thing you'd kick me out right away."... or if we try to make exceptions for certain people. "If you don't bar them, I'll take care of it myself." There's a little bit of peer pressure because community sees how you respond to things and people will call you out if they see things as unfair.

New staff may also include recent graduates of programs related to Social Work or Community Service. These graduates have theoretical knowledge but may have limited experience working with the populations with complex needs including trauma and mental health.

Educate the workers more on the participants they're going to be working with, the expectations. Challenge in hiring: a lot of front-line staff is young, with little to no life experience. You can't just throw someone into a drop-in. It's a challenge to fill those roles.

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*Hiring people that have empathy or at least trauma informed care. You can hire people with, for example, a Social Work degree so technically they have all the right things and then, when they're on the job, someone calls them a b*tch and they want to ban them for two weeks. There seems to be some disconnect between what we are learning and what we're actually doing.*

I've found that when we hire very religious people, I do find that they come in with biases or a saviour complex that ends up affecting these things severely.

When staff were asked what helps them in their work, they focused on approach and relationship building.

You don't want to feel like you are punishing people for their substance use or for their mental health.

I hate banning. I think most of us do. Trying to work towards that restorative piece would be really great.

So much of what we deal with is trying to work with people and show them that mistakes are made but it's not the end of the world. The whole idea of banning is punitive and anything that's punitive you want to be careful with because it only goes so far. You want to maintain boundaries, but you also don't want to be a jerk about it. You don't want to get rolled over, but you don't want to punish people unnecessarily.

It needs to be a 'we' mentality, a community and not an 'us versus them'.

It is a smaller space. We greet everyone by name, and we try to make it a welcoming space where they also want to invest and be part of it.

Agency staff also described how having a good relationship with the area police, the patrols, and the beats can be beneficial in supporting community members.

[Agency name] has our front sidewalk. We have an agreement with the beats team that if we try to keep [gang name] at bay and off our property they kind of let the drinking and using on that front space kind of slide so folks know they can drink out there and use their...

When the community members participate in assessing what happened and choosing their consequence, it can lead to more buy-in and better compliance.

We had a guy fighting with knives out front and he came back the next day and I gave him options for his suspension and asked: "What do you think is fair?" And we sat down and talked about it, and he actually chose a really long suspension because he understood the harm he had done to the community. He then was more strict about upholding it than we were.

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One individual who had worked as both door security for a third-party contractor and later as staff at the same agency, shared the following experience:

As Security you are in a uniform. I found when I switched (roles) and I could wear plain clothes just be me and wasn't just some face behind a uniform it was way easier to develop that relationship and rapport with people. Which sometimes makes it easier because you've got the relationship but sometimes it makes it harder because they've got that soft spot in your heart and asking some people to leave for the day is hard. As Security I found that I got way more push back (because) it's the uniform. Folks have a lot of trauma associated with that and your job is to be the bad guy, unfortunately.

Training

Community participants, agency staff, and mutual aid volunteers expressed the need for training. Training provides people with appropriate tools to build relationships that are honouring and respectful. Agency staff also talked about the need for training and their desire for training. Logistical issues of needing to fill shifts, and high staff turnover, often mean that staff do not receive sufficient or timely training. Some staff shared that training efforts were beneficial.

Staff training and retention is a huge challenge.

They have put staff through Therapeutic Crisis Intervention Training. Having that model of de-escalation and that sit down afterwards.

We have been trying to push our staff to have those intentional conversations and reminding them that these are trauma responses, it's not personal and if you can give them space and come back to it then you are more likely to build that relationship.

*It needs to be a 'we' mentality, a community and not an 'us versus them'. So, hiring people that have empathy or at least trauma informed care. You can hire people with, for example, a social work degree so technically they have all the right things and then, when they're on the job, someone calls them a b*tch and they want to ban them for two weeks. There seems to be some disconnect between what we are learning and what we're actually doing.*

Community participants called for staff training in mental health, trauma, de-escalation, and respectful relationships with some expressing a desire to take training. Many talked about how difficult it is to manage their own behaviour when they are under the influence or being triggered.

Mutual Aid workers related examples of consequences when those working with community members have not received training or are not providing ethical and respectful service.

There is such an untrained staff within the shelters too. That is a real bone of contention with me. I had a tiff with a security guard because she kicked a lady out at -35C. This lady had nothing to cover herself up with. She was huddled up on a concrete sidewalk and could not get into the building. When the security guard came out, I asked why this lady could not get into the shelter. "She swung at me." Obviously, there was no de-escalation training.

Three weeks ago, we saw [agency name] staff laughing at us through the window and closing the door on someone. The person was upset and punching the glass as the staff pointed and laughed at him. This is not the way to treat people in general.

Staying Outside is Not a Preference: Homelessness in Edmonton

While agencies typically have policies that govern their staff, at times they are not practiced. Staff felt the differences between policy and practice were due mostly to staff turnover, limited time for training, and a lack of policy.

How does one person know to ban or not to ban is often mirroring somebody who's got more seniority on them and listening/observing to what they say or what they've done in the past. There is new staff orientation which only happens a couple times a year unfortunately. There is a policy booklet but for the most time it's "read it on your own time and if you have questions reach out to your supervisor".

I've never read the policies on banning. I know there's some handbook somewhere that's been floating around. I would say pretty much all of our drop-in staff have never seen that or read that and it's not widely used. Barring has come down mostly to judgements.

COMMON AND DIVERGENT PATHS

Ending Homelessness

All participants in this research; from community members who struggle with homelessness, to mutual aid workers, to agency staff, and City of Edmonton staff agreed that the best solution to homelessness is permanent housing that provides needed wrap-around services to keep people housed. This common goal can only be achieved through coordinated supports.

Outcome-focused outreach will require the use of inter-disciplinary teams with the right mix of skill sets and appropriate training. It will require those teams to be formally linked with the coordinated response. Importantly, it will also require partnerships that enable police to tackle serious crime so social agencies can address the needs of vulnerable citizens (Task Force, 2022, p.17)

The SPDAT (Service Prioritization Decision Assistance Tool) serves to provide a system to gain an assessment of needs regarding housing (Orgcode, 2022). This tool is employed by many agencies in Edmonton when deciding who to house, with those with the highest score on the tool (the highest need) being housed first. This approach, however, may stretch the capacity of services. An outreach worker suggested an alternate approach.

Out of the people I've met, if you take a pool of everybody that's experiencing homelessness in Edmonton, I would say about 75% of them are probably not hard to house. And to maintain housing they just need that hand up. Get into a place, can I afford my rent, now can you guys leave me alone? That could be done...We could solve homelessness in a span of time... and then when you're not dealing with that other 75% you could have all these awesome workers working with people that are high acuity.

Those who work with the homeless acknowledged the systemic barriers in moving from homelessness to being housed. One COE staff explained:

Lower risk encampments will be focused for a housing focused response in which housing workers and outreach will allow people to stay longer in order to connect them with appropriate housing. But technically our maximum amount of time that someone can stay in an encampment in one place is less than the average amount of time it takes to house someone out of an encampment... thus the dilemma.

Staying Outside is Not a Preference: Homelessness in Edmonton

FURTHER OPPORTUNITIES

The following opportunities are borne out of the data and focus groups.

Indigenous-Designed and Led Transition Encampment

A city-sanctioned and supported prototype for an Indigenous designed and led outdoor space as a first step in the journey towards being housed. This camp would provide a safe space where one could rest and begin to consider next steps. It would be beneficial for both the individual experiencing homelessness as well as outreach staff trying to locate them. Provide safe spaces for tents or structures, a source of heat, potable water, toilets and showers, and a sheltered gathering space. This space would also include a sacred fire and the support of community leaders such as Elders, Aunties, Uncles. This effort would require staff to run the camp, policing and security, and housing, health, and social workers. The goal of living in this space would be to prepare for housing with an expectation of being housed within 2-3 weeks.

A Place to go When Moving Encampments

While the above suggested prototype encampments are designed as a first step in the journey to being housed, there will be many who do not have a place to go. If there is no suggested alternative of a new place to set up, every effort should be made not to move encampments. The two conflicting concerns of the homeless are having autonomy and being warm. While shelters provide warmth, being outdoors allows for autonomy. Perhaps set up a site⁸ where people could set up tents or have partitioned spaces, they could call their own. This idea is somewhat like the shelter pods but in a warm place.

Working Together

Mutual Aid groups provide services away from drop-ins and shelters where they serve hard to reach community members. They often have both broad and in-depth knowledge of the community, with many also having lived experience with homelessness. These service providers are integral to helping the homeless but often feel that they are outsiders who are not valued or respected by enforcement teams. All those who work with the homeless should find common ground in their common task of helping the homeless. Relationship building that brings together human service agencies, City of Edmonton staff, and Mutual Aid groups to identify common goals and seek opportunities to work in harmony would go far to benefit the community of those who stay outside.

Conversation Circles and Events

Bridging Events

Offer community events to bring together housed and unhoused community members to build relationships and understanding. Share research findings in an infographic with community members in neighbourhoods experiencing high levels of tension between the housed and unhoused. The intent would be twofold; unhoused community members would see an outcome of their participation and other community members would receive credible information about those who stay outside.

⁸ For example the Coliseum.

Staying Outside is Not a Preference: Homelessness in Edmonton

Learning Events that also Bridge

A cross-discipline workshop to work on problem-solving and visioning. This event could be an opportunity to bring together people with lived experience, mutual aid groups, service agencies, and City employees. This activity could be instrumental in building relationships, understanding the perspectives of others, and finding ways to mutually respect and support each other.

Building Strengths & Bonds

Monthly circle conversations to be co-hosted by those with lived experience and service agency staff. This idea came out of the focus groups held during this research project where community participants asked for further conversations and the opportunity to share their own experiences. This would also be a good place to share agency concerns and involve community participants in working towards solutions.

SUGGESTIONS FOR FURTHER RESEARCH

The learnings from this project added the voices of community members with recent homeless experience to the literature already available on these issues in Edmonton. Going forward, the focus should be on providing services and housing people with a research component that includes comprehensive measurements to assess the success of these initiatives.

The following are suggestions for research that could provide further insights into the lives of the homeless, the work of those who support them, and community responses:

- Effects of using contracted security firms versus agency staff for entry to shelters and drop-ins
- Connections of homeless persons to their families, relatives and home communities
- A cost analysis of the suggested city sanctioned camps versus informal encampments
- Forms of Social Capital that are helpful in maintaining housing
- Specific needs of homeless women
- Specific needs of homeless people with physical disability(ies)
- The uniformity of bans across types of services
- Evaluation of the use of community data sharing apps

Staying Outside is Not a Preference: Homelessness in Edmonton

REFERENCES

CTV News. (2022, October 1). *Alberta Unveils \$187M plan to address addiction and homelessness*. Retrieved from <https://edmonton.ctvnews.ca:/alberta-unveils-187m-plan-to-address-addiction-and-homelessness-1.6091955>

Edmonton. (2021). *2021 Encampments Response Evaluation Report*. Edmonton: Community Services Department Strategy Section Partnerships and Evaluation Team.

M.A.P.S. Alberta Capital Region. (2022) *Left Outside: The Experience of Being Banned in Edmonton*.

Task Force. (2022). *Recovery Oriented Housing Model*. Edmonton: Open Government Licence Alberta.

Thompson, J. (2022, April 5). *Edmonton's homeless population has doubled since the pandemic, City says*. Retrieved from <https://edmonton.ctvnews.ca/edmonton-s-homeless-population-has-doubled-since-the-pandemic-city-says-1.5850173>

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Staying Outside is Not a Preference: Homelessness in Edmonton

APPENDICES LIST

The following documents are available for download off the M.A.P.S. website at:

<https://mapsab.ca/community-based-research/>

A1 – Literature review

A2 – Questionnaire

A3 – Focus Group Questions

A4 – Information letter

A5 – Frequencies and Descriptives

A6 – After care sheet

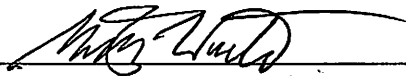
A7 – Left Outside: The Experience of Being Banned in Edmonton

A8 – CNBR Results Infographic

A9 – Banned: Falling Through the Safety Net project map

A10 – Everyday in the Life of Homeless Edmontonians journey map

This is Exhibit "G" referred to in the Affidavit of
Devyn Ens, sworn this 15th day of September, 2023



CHRISTOPHER WILBER
LAWYER



Reference: 2023-G-0339
Your Reference: 7872 CRW

July 4, 2023

Chris Wiebe
Engel Law

Sent by email only: chris@engellaw.ca

Dear Chris Wiebe:

Re: *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy (FOIP) Act*
Response Letter

This letter is in response to your City of Edmonton FOIP Request 2023-G-0339 under the FOIP Act for the following:

Monthly breakdown of the following:

1. *# of encampments assessed as high-risk*
2. *# of encampments closed*
3. *# of occupants displaced*
4. *# of encampments closed during extreme weather response for each of the following three time periods*
 - i. *November 29 – December 26, 2022*
 - ii. *February 19 – 24, 2023*
 - iii. *March 4 – 12, 2023*
5. *# of propane tanks or generators removed from encampments*
6. *# of encampment displacements with no record of occupants being offered shelter*
7. *# of encampment displacements where occupants were offered but declined shelter*
8. *# of encampment displacements where occupants were offered and accepted shelter, but were unable to access it*
9. *# of encampment displacements where occupants were offered and accepted shelter and were able to access it*

October 1, 2021 to March 31, 2023

We are pleased to provide full access to the requested records. The attached record (2 pages) was created in response to this request and responds to points 2 (# of encampments closed) and 4 (# of encampments closed during extreme weather response for specified time periods) of the request scope.

The requested information for points 1, 3 and 5-9 is not tracked by the City of Edmonton.

Under section 65(1) of the FOIP Act, you may ask the Information and Privacy Commissioner to review this decision. To request a review, you must complete and deliver a Request for Review form within 60 days from the date of this notice to the Office of the Information and Privacy Commissioner (OIPC) at #410, 9925 – 109 Street, Edmonton, Alberta, T5K 2J8. The form is available on the Commissioner's website www.oipc.ab.ca or you can call 1-888-878-4044 to request a copy of the form.

If you wish to request a review, please provide the OIPC with the following information:

1. The reference number quoted at the top of this notice.
2. A copy of this letter.
3. A copy of your original request for information that you sent to the City of Edmonton.

Section 67(1) of the FOIP Act requires the Commissioner to give a copy of your request for review to the head of a public body and to any other person who, in the Commissioner's opinion, is affected by the request. Therefore your request for review should not contain any information that you do not wish to be exchanged with the other parties.

Cited sections of the FOIP Act can be found online at:
<https://kings-printer.alberta.ca/documents/Acts/F25.pdf>.

If you have any questions or concerns, please contact me at 780-423-2536 or by email at leah.hughey@edmonton.ca.

Sincerely,



Leah Hughey
Senior Corporate Access and Privacy Analyst
Corporate Access and Privacy Office

Attachment: Records (Pages 1-2)

Month, Year	No of Active Encampments Closed
Oct 2021	83
Nov 2021	36
Dec 2021	16
Jan 2022	34
Feb 2022	29
Mar 2022	34
Apr 2022	115
May 2022	131
Jun 2022	115
Jul 2022	97
Aug 2022	99
Sep 2022	89
Oct 2022	79
Nov 2022	26
Dec 2022	14
Jan 2023	36
Feb 2023	38
Mar 2023	56

Note


Both active and non-active camps are closed by the IET Team. The numbers pulled here are only those active encampments closed during the given periods.

Period	No of Active Encampments Closed
Nov 29 - Dec 26, 2022	14
Feb 19 - Feb 24, 2023	1
Mar 4 - Mar 12, 2023	10

Note

Both active and non-active camps are closed by the IET Team. The numbers pulled here are only those active encampments closed during the given periods.

**This is Exhibit “ H ” referred to in the Affidavit of
Devyn Ens, sworn this 15th day of September, 2023**


CHRISTOPHER WIEBE
LAWYER



**Edmonton Police Service
High Risk Encampment Team
Sergeant Shift Update**



Downtown Encampment Highlights

Date	File Number	Primary Member (Reg. and Last Name)	Division	Location Attended	Status of Encampment	Event Summary / Comments
1-May-2022	22318754	3385 A/Sgt. COULES, Ryan	Downtown	104 St / 99 Av	Active	Members attended a reported encampment and located one structure and one occupant. The occupant didn't want any resources; however, due to mobility issues, he requested a ride to the Hope Mission, which was fulfilled. The encampment was a moderate risk and sent for clean-up.
1-May-2022	22318926	2973 Cst. RESSLER, Darcy	Downtown	93 St / 101 Av	Active	Attended 2 structure camp near 93 street/101 Avenue. Encountered 2X subjects, given 2 day eviction notice, will follow up then.
1-May-2022	22319038	2973 Cst. RESSLER, Darcy	Downtown	Dawson Park	Active	Attended 3 structure encampment in Dawson Park, encountered 2 subjects, 6 day eviction notice given.
2-May-2022	22008261	2973 Cst. RESSLER, Darcy	Downtown	9424 106 Av	Active	Members attended the Community Gardens for encampments reported via 311. Upon arrival, five structures were located, with two occupants. The other structures were abandoned. There was excessive amounts of garbage, property, human / drug biohazards, and evidence of fires around each structure. Two of the occupants are working with Boyle Street Co-op. The occupants were allowed time to gather their belongings. The City Operations Team attended to conduct the clean-up process.
3-May-2022	22322736	2991 Cst. BEELER, Dave	Downtown	Louise McKinney Park	Active	HRET attended Louise McKinney park and located 4 structures and 4 occupants. All were cooperative and committed to leaving immediately.
3-May-2022	22322828	2991 Cst. BEELER, Dave	Downtown	Louise McKinney Park	Active	HRET attended an encampment east of the new LRT/walking bridge. Three structures were found with two being unoccupied. Members located 17(1) 17(4) who was cooperative and accepted supports. Outreach contacted for their follow up.
4-May-2022	21055617	2973 Cst. RESSLER, Darcy	Downtown	Hope Mission	Active	Attended Hope Mission for scheduled clean up. Approx 24 tents and other structures dismantled and dozens of occupants moved along. Police members had to issue several warnings to 3 people for starting fires, fighting and refusing to pack up tents. Several trucks full of garbage and other property removed by city clean up crews who spent several hours working on returning the surrounding property of the Hope Mission back to its original state.
4-May-2022	22325485	2973 Cst. RESSLER, Darcy	Downtown	Railtown Park	Active	Attended 2 structure encampment in Railtown Park, 1 unoccupied, 1 occupied with 2 occupants, sent for clean up.
5-May-2022	22327348	3124 A/Sgt. STARR, Dallas	Downtown	Sheriff Robertson Park	Active	HRET attended Sheriff Robertson Park for a reported illegal encampment. upon arrival located one structure set up directly beside the playground at the location. Identified 2 SJ's that refused outreach but based on location was considered high risk and required immediate eviction. They packed and cleaned up without incident
7-May-2022	22332600	3124 A/Sgt. STARR, Dallas	Downtown	Mary Burlie Park	Active	Attended established encampment with City Operations. 5 encampments taken down and removed. City clean up attended for park revitalization project and graffiti removal. 4 assorted knives as well as one axe seized for destruction by City Operations. 40+ used syringes located on site. 2 individuals on scene refused to provide identification, however were cooperative and departed without incident.
7-May-2022	22332420	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, M ke	Downtown	Dawson Park Ravine	Active	Located large encampment with 4 dwellings. All occupants co-op and departed after providing verbal identification. City Operations attended for clean up. 4 kitchen style butcher knives seized as well as an axe and machete.
8-May-2022	22334813	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, M ke	Downtown	Louise McKinney Park	Active	HRET attended the location of Louise McKinney Park for a large illegal encampment complaint. 3 Encampments identified and provided with several (3) hours to pack up and depart, no effort made. Garbage, human waste a syringes strewn throughout. City Operations attended and cleaned site.

						All occupants refused outreach assistance or transports to shelters.
9-May-2022	22336089	2973 Cst. RESSLER, Darcy	Downtown	Louise McKinney Park	Active	Attended 2 structure encampment in Louise McKinney Park, unoccupied as of very recently, sent for clean up after numerous attempts and reoccupations.
11-May-2022	22005217	2931 A/Sgt. DeROCHER, Travis	Downtown	Bissell	Active	HRET conducted clean up at the Bissell along 105 Av with the assistance of Sgt. MAK's Disruption team, Park Rangers and City Operations Team (5) trucks. Clean up was started at 0800 hrs and concluded at 1400 hrs. During clean up HRET along Park Rangers and City Operations were confronted ^{17(1) 17(4)} (free lance media). This is the second time ^{17(1) 17(4)} has engaged members of HRET to voice his displeasure with Police dealing with encampments. ^{17(1) 17(4)} is well voiced on social media platforms and claims to be an author. On this date ^{17(1) 17(4)} videoed HRET members and kindly posted them to Social media platforms. At the conclusion of the clean several residents approached HRET members thanking them for cleaning up the area and bring a sort of safety back to the area.
12-May-2022	22005217	2931 A/Sgt. DeROCHER, Travis	Downtown	Bissell	Active	HRET conducted proactive follow-up at the Bissell as there were two encampments set back up. One encampment was set up in the fenced off lot on the north west corner of 96 St/105A Av, the other was set up on the south side of 105A Av. The occupant who was in the lot at 96 St/105A Av claimed no ownership to any items and left the encampment abandoning it. City Operations were contacted for the clean up. The occupants on the southside of 105A Av gathered their belongings and closed their tent with out issues. HRET also engaged with a male who was interested in housing options. His information was passed on to Homeward Trust who advised they would be looking to follow up male to begin the process.
13-May-2022	22345303	3124 A/Sgt. STARR, Dallas	Downtown	High Level Bridge	Active	HRET attended the north side of the High Level Bridge for an illegal encampment. Located a significant encampment under the bridge interfering with city maintenance efforts in the area. There was syringes, open fires, evidence of past fires, presumed stolen good and biohazardous waste strewn throughout area. SJ refused outreach or transports. Was given time to pack and leave with remaining waste removed by City Operations
15-May-2022	22004035	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, M ke	Downtown	95 st / 105 av	Active	Follow up from previous closure. 14 encampments removed/closed at location. City operations attended to remove debris and clean up site. All working members and HRET as well as all available city operations members in attendance for several hours to clean area. removed 13 truckloads of garbage from the area. Was littered with human waste, used syringes, stolen goods, weapons and evidence of fires.
15-May-2022	22125035	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, M ke	Downtown	105 Av / 96 st	Active	Attended location with City Operations on LRT pathway. 9 more camps dismantled and removed. Another 7 truckloads of garbage cleaned up. 2 individuals offered and declined supports. Littered with syringes, human waste, evidence of fires, presumed stolen goods, rotting food.
15-May-2022	22004035	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, M ke	Downtown	105 Av / 96 st	Active	Scheduled closure of location beside bottle depot. Members of HRET attended and removed encampments with city operations.
16-May-2022	22352204	3124 A/Sgt. STARR, Dallas	Downtown	Sheriff Robertson Park	Active	HRET responded to an illegal encampment in Sheriff Robertson Park. One structure set up right beside children's playground. SJ identified and refused outreach or transports. He left the park without further incident and City Operations cleaned up the remaining waste. There was a bbq and propane tank, broken aquarium with glass everywhere and presumed stolen goods in the encampment.
16-May-2022	22352309	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, M ke	Downtown	111 Av / 82 st	Active	Attended site with City Operations as a precleaning for an upcoming community cleanup initiative. 3 individuals currently being assisted by Boyle services (call made to confirm). One individual declined supports. The areas had garbage and rotting food as well as signs of recent fires.
17-May-2022	22354280	2931 A/Sgt. DeROCHER, Travis	Downtown	Alex Taylor Rd	Active	HRET attended the location for 14 occupied camps who were given 24 hr notice of clean up on today's date. All occupants eventually packed up and moved along. City operations crew were not available for clean up however, the area was sent to them for clean up. Given the volume of garbage the clean it will take several hours.
18-May-2022	22356508	2973 Cst. RESSLER,	Downtown	Hope Mission	Active	Attended a large, multi structure encampment exceeding 30 structures completely blocking the sidewalk across the street

		Darcy				from the Hope Mission. A sudden death was discovered in one of the tents and beats members held the scene for EMS and the ME to respond. Several holes had been cut in the chain link fence leading to the EPSB maintenance lot with reports of stolen property from EPSB vehicles. Beats Sgt to maintain a cleared sidewalk for EPSB to clad the fence with tin siding in the near future.
18-May-2022	22357064	2973 Cst. RESSLER, Darcy	Downtown	95 St / 106 Ave	Active	Attended a 4 structure encampment 95 St / 106 Ave, 4 occupants identified, immediate eviction notice given due to recent fires, up against a fence and blocking a sidewalk.
19-May-2022	22358947	2931 A/Sgt. DeROCHER, Travis	Downtown	109 St/109Av	Active	HRET attended location, locating one active Encampment and one abandoned. Occupants of the active encampment were advised to leave. The occupants were cooperative and packed their items up and left the area. City Operations were contacted to clean up the abandoned encampment along with what was left behind from the active one.
20-May-2022	22361178	2931 A/Sgt. DeROCHER, Travis	Downtown	95 St/106 Av	Active	HRET conducted follow up on 7 structure encampment for removal at 95 St/106 Av. Occupants were cooperative and packed up their belongings moving on. City Operations attended and cleaned items left behind. Several buckets of feces were located and disposed of.
20-May-2022	22003981	2931 A/Sgt. DeROCHER, Travis	Downtown	94 St/106 Ave	Active	HRET attended the laid lot (95 St/106 Av). Numerous occupied encampments with a small bike repair shop going on. Occupants were given eviction notice for 0800AM on May21. Some occupants began to pack their items up. Closure to be completed on May 21.
20-May-2022	22361820	2931 A/Sgt. DeROCHER, Travis	Downtown	119 St /111 Av	Active	HRET attended location locating one occupied encampment and on abandoned. Occupants were cooperative and packed up their items leaving the area. City Operations attended cleaning up the abandoned encampment and items left behind from the occupied one.
21-May-2022	22003981	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, M ke	Downtown	9555 106 Av	Active	HRET attended the City of Edmonton owned lot at location for a schedule closure of the high risk location. 5 structures/clients located among multiple abandoned encampments. All subjects refused outreach and were well aware of the resources available to them nearby. They were given time to pack their belongings and leave. the remaining garbage was removed by City operations.
21-May-2022	22363872	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, M ke	Downtown	109A Av / 110 St	Active	HRET attended location for a scheduled closure/eviction of the property 17(1) 17(4) declined supports and has been removed from this location multiple times. The location is directly beside a playground and elementary school. Human waste, rotting food and garbage was strewn around the encampment. City operations attended to remove debris and clean site.
22-May-2022	22366512	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, M ke	Downtown	95st / 105 av	Active	HRET attended the Community gardens. Located 7 structures occupied by 3 individuals. All 3 individuals declined supports. Rotting food, evidence of fires (damaged trees), syringes, human waste all located around encampments. Given opportunity to pack belongings and leave then City Operations attended and cleaned up leftover waste
22-May-2022	22366131	3124 A/Sgt. STARR, Dallas	Downtown	92 st / 106a Av	Active	HRET Attended a large illegal encampment set up on the City of Edmonton owned lot on 92 st/ 106a av. Upon arrival HRET located 5 structures attached to the chain link fence (damaging fence). The area resembled a landfill with the amount of garbage, human waste, syringes, presumed stolen goods, rotten food and evidence of open fires. 6 occupants were identified and all refused outreach and were well aware of the resources nearby. All SJ's are well known to HRET as chronic disorder clients. Because of the location and condition of the encampment it was considered high risk and had to be immediately cleaned and closed. All occupants packed their belongings and remaining garbage was cleaned by city operations
23-May-2022	CPO Event	CPO HANSEN, Nick	Downtown	Queen Mary Park	Active	Officers attended Queen Mary park for an illegal encampment Upon arrival officers made contact with subjects who set up their encampment within the school field area. Due to evidence of drug use, potentially stolen property and being close to a school and play ground. Officers removed the encampment and evicted the occupants.
24-May-2022	22370850	3124 A/Sgt. STARR, Dallas	Downtown	95ST/107AVE	Active	HRET attended McCauley School 95st/107ave in response to an illegal encampment complaint. On arrival, officers found an active camp less than 20 meters away from an active play ground. Camp was deemed high risk. Occupant vacated without issue. Supports refused.
24-May-2022	22370895	3124 A/Sgt	Downtown	Alex Taylor	Active	HRET attended the area of Alex Taylor School for an illegal

	22070030	3124 A/Sgt. STARR, Dallas	Downtown	Alex Taylor School	Active	HRET attended the area of Alex Taylor School for an illegal encampment. Upon arrival located 4 structures (3 abandoned) and spoke to 17(1) 17(4) who was given 24 hrs to vacate the premise for proper closure and cleanup. The area had garbage/waste strewn throughout, evidence of fires and syringes. SJ refused outreach and claims to work with Mustard Seed.
25-May-2022	22004138	2973 Cst. RESSLER, Darcy	Downtown	Hope Mission	Active	Attended the Hope Mission for a scheduled cleanup of approximately 25 structures and to maintain security for a fencing company installing metal cladding against a chain link fence owned by EPSB. Other occupants given notice to depart by morning, clean up to resume the following day.
25-May-2022	22005217	2931 A/Sgt. DeROCHER, Travis	Downtown	Bissell Centre	Active	HRET conducted a proactive follow-up at the Bissell for 10 structures that had been put up recently. All occupants were cooperative and packed their belongings and left their garbage behind for City Operations to clean. During HRET's time at the Bissell, HRET members observed 17(1) 17(4) in possession of what appeared to be a newer STIHL gas trimmer. Through conversation, 17(1) 17(4) agreed the trimmer could be stolen and voluntarily turned it over. HRET contacted STIHL, who provided the last owner, who was contacted. HRET was able to reunite the trimmer with its rightful owner, who was very happy to get it back. 17(1), 17(4)
27-May-2022	22004035	2931 A/Sgt. DeROCHER, Travis	Downtown	LRT Pathway	Active	HRET attended the LRT path between 95St/96St and closed 17 Encampments which were marked by Disruption teams over the last week via the 311 App. City Operation attended with two trucks. It took 8-10 loads to complete the clean up. As well, 131 needles were discovered and disposed of. Occupants were either in the process of using supports for housing or refused. Several of the occupiers are repeat community members who have down sized significantly over the past weeks. HRET noticed during this clean up the occupants were making their own garbage piles without being asked.
28-May-2022	22379953	2973 Cst. RESSLER, Darcy	Downtown	105 Ave / 98 St	Active	Attended an 11 structure encampment on 105 Ave and 98 St, east of Spady. Multiple structures dismantled, 78 needles counted, cleaned up without issue but took several hours.
28-May-2022	22004138	2973 Cst. RESSLER, Darcy	Downtown	Hope Mission	Active	Attended a large, 10 structure encampment at the Hope Mission. Clean up crews found a small kitten in an abandoned tent, which was turned over to animal control. Clean up took several hours with few issues from occupants. While HRET members were providing security for clean up crews, Cst. RESSLER spotted a BOLF'd suspect vehicle within minutes of being car jacked with a believed fire arm drive past the Hope Mission. Cst. RESSLER voiced the vehicle, pursued on foot in full sprint and assisted patrol with a 20(1)(m) in the George Spady parking lot taking one into custody. The firearm was located and found to be a replica.
28-May-2022	22380591	2973 Cst. RESSLER, Darcy	Downtown	Jasper Ave / 91 St	Active	Attended a single structure encampment near Jasper Avenue and 91 street. One occupant identified, immediate eviction after advanced notice.
28-May-2022	22308741	2973 Cst. RESSLER, Darcy	Downtown	10621 96 St	Active	Attended an on view encampment complaint at the rear of 10621 96 street. Homeowner observed police nearby and directed HRET members to the alley behind his residence. HRET members found a male and female subject actively injecting drugs under a tarp with a small propane bottle up against a wooden fence. Both SJ's more than eager to depart without being identified. Dozens of needles picked up by homeowner, see attached picture.
29-May-2022	22008261	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, Mike	Downtown	Community Gardens	Active	HRET attended Community Gardens, located 6 structures and an open fire in the middle of the property that had caused damage to the tree nearby. City operations arrived to remove debris and leftover garbage. Group somewhat upset at moving, no names provided. All had been dealt with previously and supports were offered but refused by all occupants.
29-May-2022	22041380	3124 A/Sgt. STARR, Dallas	Downtown	Hope Mission	Active	HRET attended the Hope Mission as a follow up to yesterday's planned closure. HRET located 9 structures that was re-inhabited the area. HRET was able to successfully close all 9 structures removing 5 truckloads of garbage and over 40 syringes cleaned up from the area.
30-May-2022	22384956	3124 A/Sgt. STARR, Dallas	Downtown	Sheriff Robertson Park	Active	HRET attended Kinnard Ravine in response to an illegal encampment. One structure located occupied by 17(1) 17(4) Was informed his encampment was high risk and would have to be vacated by the end of the day. There are day programs for children that were unable to use the ravine as a result of this encampment location. HRET will follow up to ensure proper closure of illegal encampment.
31-May-2022	22386698	3124 A/Sgt	Downtown	Kinnard	Active	HRET attended Kinnard Off Leash Dog Park for an illegal

	22000000	3127 A/Sgt. STARR, Dallas	Downtown	Kimball Ravine	Active	HRET attended Kimball on East Dog Park for an illegal encampment. The encampment had an active fire, used syringes, drug paraphernalia and garbage all in plain view at the dog park. The occupant 17(1) 17(4) is well known to HRET and refused outreach. She packed what she wanted to keep and left the area on foot. The remaining garbage was cleaned by city operations
1-Jun-2022	22388976	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, M ke	Downtown	Hope Mission	Active	HRET attended HOPE mission and Herb Jameson for our weekly shelter cleanup. 5 encampments at location 2 abandoned, 3 individuals remained. 2 individuals are presently working with Boyle services. As 17(1) 17(4) is nearing end of life she is receiving assistance from HELP, Hope and was not moved along.
1-Jun-2022	22389926	3124 A/Sgt. STARR, Dallas	Downtown	83 st / 111 av	Active	HRET attended the green space at 83 st / 111 ave for an illegal encampment complaint. Upon arrival HRET identified 2 structures occupied by 2 occupants. Both refused transports or outreach assistance. Given until the end of the day to vacate the location based on condition and location of encampment. Stated they understood. HRET will follow up to ensure proper cleaning and closure of location
3-Jun-2022	22248215	2931 A/Sgt. DeROCHER, Travis	Downtown	Boyle Street Co-op	Active	DDIV beats requested HRET assistance with the closure of encampments at the Boyle Street give the increase of violence and calls for service as a result of the Encampments that were established of late. On this day HRET attended with DDIV beats and found 10 encampments occupied. Several other encampments were already packed up and gone thanks to DDIV beats being proactive over the last several days informing the occupants and Boyle Street staff the closure date was happening on this date. The clean was efficient and completed in just over an hour.
4-Jun-2022	22397683	2973 Cst. RESSLER, Darcy	Downtown	91 St / Jasper Ave	Active	Attended a single encampment under the bridge on Jasper Ave at 91 St. 1 occupant identified and asked to vacate the area. Occupant left willingly and area sent for clean up.
4-Jun-2022	22397708	2973 Cst. RESSLER, Darcy	Downtown	10551 107 St	Active	Attended a single structure encampment at 10551 - 107 St. One occupant identified, who packed up and vacated the area for clean up crews to restore.
4-Jun-2022	22397708	2973 Cst. RESSLER, Darcy	Downtown	106 Ave / 107 St	Active	Attended a single structure encampment on the corner of 106 Ave and 107 St, same green space as 10551 - 107 St. One occupant identified, asked to vacate for clean up crews to restore the area. 38 needles counted.
4-Jun-2022	22397590	2931 A/Sgt. DeROCHER, Travis	Downtown	Dawson Park	Active	HRET began the sweep of Dawson North River Valley. Two large sites were cleaned for a total of 5 encampments. There were 11 truck loads of garbage. 18 needles were also discovered and 8 knives. HRET will continue with the sweep of the north bank tomorrow and it is expected take several more days to complete the clean.
5-Jun-2022	22399413	2973 Cst. RESSLER, Darcy	Downtown	Hotel MacDonald	Active	Attended a large tarp/encampment spread over 3 sets of wide stairs leading away from the Hotel MacDonald. 3 very belligerent and verbally abusive subjects encountered who begrudgingly packed up several shopping carts and left the area without providing identification. Police apologized to several tourists who witnessed the verbal onslaught towards police and had to walk around the mass of property and garbage strewn all over the stairs. Clean up concluded without issue.
5-Jun-2022	22400161	2931 A/Sgt. DeROCHER, Travis	Downtown	103St/106Av	Active	HRET received information from HELP that several tents had been set up just east of the HELP building in a vacant lot at 103 St/106 Av. HELP sent a picture of the signage that was put up on the temporary fencing around the lot. The home-made signs read "Native Healing Grounds." Concerned for the area becoming occupied as a peace camp, HRET attended the area, which had 7 encampments, and removed the signs. Bylaw Officers confirmed the lot was owned by the KATZ Group. With EPS having Agent Status, HRET advised all occupants to leave given they were trespassing. Occupants were cooperative for the most part and packed their belongings, left the area and were advised not to return. Several occupants were recognized as people who were moved from Boyle Street earlier in the week. HELP attended to assist with Navigators for those who were interested in their services.
5-Jun-2022	22397590	2931 A/Sgt. DeROCHER, Travis	Downtown	Dawson Park River Valley	Active	HRET assisted City Operations as they continued to clean up the bank of Dawson Park at 91 St/Jasper Av. COE crews began to use large demolition bags which were winched up from the depths of the river valley, full of garbage, by COE trucks. While the crews were cleaning, a fire was observed in the river valley just to the west. EFD responded and put out a single tree that somehow caught fire near the top. HRET

						located two large encampments. One encampment was occupied and all parties were instructed to leave. The other was abandoned. HRET advised City Operations to attend the area immediately to clean the two encampments given the recent fire. This clean up is scheduled to continue over the next few days.
5-Jun-2022	22114716	2973 Cst. RESSLER, Darcy	Downtown	Mary Burlie Park	Active	Attended Mary Burlie Park, 10 structures found with approx 19 occupants. Almost all packed up and left willingly, one lone female was engaged by HELP members who happened to be proactive in the area. HELP members assisted with packing the females belongings, area vacated and cleaned up without issue. Lighting upgrades and insect spraying for the trees is scheduled for Tuesday, June 07.
6-Jun-2022	22379683	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, M ke	Downtown	91 St / Jasper Av	Active	One structure sent for clean up. Lone tenant was offered support and declined. To Note. Tenant was 9 months pregnant.
8-Jun-2022	CPO EVENT	CPO HENDRICKSON	Downtown	95st/108 ave	Active	HRET attended the area of 95st/108ave in response to an encampment complaint. On arrival, officers found 4 structures, with large amounts of debris, needles, open fires, with in 30 meters of a playground. The one occupant presented left with his belongings without issue. Officers observed an active fire in 1 structure, which caused the structure to set a blaze. CPO HENDRICKSON extinguished the fire without further issue. Debris removed by city operations.
10-Jun-2022	22411518	2991 Cst. BEELER, Dave	Downtown	1112 109 av	Active	HRET arrived and found 17(1) 17(4) cooperative and agreeable to moving his small tent. Resources offer and refused by 17(1) 17(4)
10-Jun-2022	22411748	2991 Cst. BEELER, Dave	Downtown	120 St 111 Ave	Active	HRET attended an encampment along the green space running north/south between 107Ave and 111 Ave on 120 street. Encampment found and single female subject would only identify herself as 17(1) 17(4) had been warned the previous day she had to leave and waited until the follow up visit to start packing. Of note the camp was set up along a busy pathway that bordered a kids park
11-Jun-2022		2991 Cst. BEELER, Dave	Downtown	120 St 107 Ave	Active	HRET attended the green space at 120 St and 107 Ave. 17(1) 17(4) packing up their tent. Services were offered and refused. Card with contact information for Boyle Macaulay was left with 17(1) 17(4). Cleanup crew was called to take away refuse.
12-Jun-2022	22416277	2931 A/Sgt. DeROCHER, Travis	Downtown	River Valley / 93 St	Active	Attended a 2 structure encampment in the river valley at approx 93 St. 2 subjects encountered, advised of a potential clean up in the coming days. Both parties agreed to comply, to be followed up on.
13-Jun-2022	CPO Event	CPO HANSEN, Nick	Downtown	Dawson Park Boat Launch	Active	Officers attended Dawson Park for an encampment Upon arrival officers noted a large encampment with large amounts of potentially stolen property, evidence of drug use and fires. Officers provided the eviction date of 22JUN20 to the occupants.
13-Jun-2022	CPO Event	CPO KOBAYASHI, Pamela	Downtown	Dawson Park Boat Launch	Active	Officers attended Dawson Park for an illegal encampment. Upon arrival officers spoke to one occupant within the encampment and provided the eviction date of 22JUN20. Officers noted evidence of fires, potentially stolen property and evidence of drug use at the site.
13-Jun-2022	CPO Event	CPO HANSEN, Nick	Downtown	Dawson Park Boat Launch	Active	Officers attended an encampment within Dawson Park. Upon arrival to the encampment, occupants of a different encampment noted the occupant was not around at the time of inspection. However they would pass along eviction date of 22JUN20. Officers noted evidence of potentially stolen property, damage to parkland, drug use and fires within the area.
13-Jun-2022	Cpo Event	CPO KOBAYASHI, Pamela	Downtown	96 Street / 108 Avenue	Active	HRET attended 108 Avenue / 96 Street for a reported encampment in a playground. Upon arrival officers located two structures in the greenspace. Occupants were asked to leave immediately and did as requested. A third female identified as 17(1) 17(4) was located actively engaging in drug activity on the playground. She was escorted off property after witnessing her discard her drug paraphernalia in the sand on the playground. The school attached to the yard had to cancel recess in order to give City Operations enough time to rake the sand and clean remaining refuse.
13-Jun-2022	CPO Event	CPO KOBAYASHI, Pamela	Downtown	Dawson Park Boat Launch	Active	Officers attended Dawson park for an illegal encampment. Upon arrival officers noted one encampment with three occupants. Officers also noted evidence of drug use, fires, damage to parkland and potentially stolen property.

						Officers provided the eviction date of 22JUN20 for all occupants.
13-Jun-2022	CPO Event	CPO HANSEN, Nick	Downtown	Dawson Park Boat Launch	Active	Officers attended Dawson park for an illegal encampment. Upon arrival officers made contact with one occupant of a large encampment and provided the eviction date of 22JUN20. Officers noted evidence of drug use, fires, potentially stolen property, and damage to parkland.
14-Jun-2022	22420267	3163 Cst. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	105 av / 98 st	Active	HRET was advised of tents along the EPCOR tower fence line at 105 av and 98 st. Due to construction beginning and ribbon cutting in coming week. Of seven tents, 3 were still occupied. Due to rain community members would not come out for proper identification. Given 24hr notice and the 4 abandoned tents were removed by city operations. The remaining occupied tents were given until 0800 on 22JUN15 to vacate the area. HRET will follow up with the location for proper closure.
15-Jun-2022	22422223	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	98 st/ 105 av	Active	HRET attended for closure and cleanup follow up that began previous day. One structure removed by community member and other community member left prior to team coming into contact with them. Community member stated she may have housing in the coming weeks. Location was successfully closed and cleaned by City Operations.
16-Jun-2022	22424471	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, M ke	Downtown	Grierson Hill / 100 St	Active	Attended Funicular area as requested by forestry services. 2 structures located and required immediate removal due to city forestry working in the area. Both structures cleaned by client before they departed. City Operation attended to clean site. Services offered and declined by both parties.
16-Jun-2022	22424618	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	11331 99 av	Active	HRET responded to camp with one community member. Found it to be on private property. CPO will send out for property owner to be notified and clean area. Original reported by disruption team who will be contacted to get agent status for future issues.
16-Jun-2022	22452298	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, M ke	Downtown	93 St / 106 Av	Active	HRET attended a regular location of 93 ST / 106a Ave. 9 structure encampment located with one lone female on site. Small active fire put out, encampment covers a large area and will require numerous trips to empty out. Female provided with 24 hours to clean individual site and depart area and advised to inform any other active encampments at the location of the same.
17-Jun-2022	22426809	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	10635 93 st	Active	HRET attended encampment that was asked to leave the day prior and encampment has been active for a few weeks with 25 complaints. Occupants were good to deal with, however, resident in the area was upset the encampment was being moved along. The resident had to be asked to leave by myself when occupants started to get verbally hostile with her. Another resident walking her dog took video of us and occupants for a few minutes. Multiple truck loads taken off site of encampment. Many occupants stated they are on lists for housing and did not need more supports at this time. They do appreciate wa k through supports due to not wanting to go to shelters.
20-Jun-2022	22433954	2991 Cst. BEELER, Dave	Downtown	Queen Mary Park	Active	HRET attended an encampment at Queen Mary Park. Located one individual who declined supports was in the process of leaving the area. Cleanup requested.
20-Jun-2022	22434000	2991 Cst. BEELER, Dave	Downtown	Queen Mary Park	Active	HRET attended camp in Queen Mary Park. Camp was generally clean and tidy but numerous empty dime bags were observed. Community member refused services and cleaned up area with no issues
20-Jun-2022	22434239	2991 Cst. BEELER, Dave	Downtown	110Ave 110 St	Active	HRET attended park beside St. Catherine school. Found 1 encampment with male and female who declined to identify themselves while being cooperative and apologetic. Began the process of moving. Camp was clean but right beside an elementary school.
21-Jun-2022	CPO Event	CPO KOBAYASHI, Pamela	Downtown	Borden Park	Active	HRET attended Borden Park for a reported encampment beside the playground. One active camp with a single female occupant was observed. Rotting food, garbage, and presumed stolen property was present. The occupant is a chronic disorder subject who was asked to vacate immediately. City Operations attended and subsequently removed remaining debris.
21-Jun-2022	CPO Event	CPO KOBAYASHI, Pamela	Downtown	Borden Park	Active	HRET attended Borden Park for a reported encampment near the playground. Upon arrival two males were sleeping under a gazebo at a bookable picnic site. Dime bags and uncapped

						needles littered the ground. weapons and stolen property were scattered amongst the debris. A previous fire which appeared to have been used to burn wires was noted at the site. Both occupants were asked to leave immediately and did as requested. City Operations attended and removed remaining debris.
21-Jun-2022	22436204	2991 Cst. BEELER, Dave	Downtown	96St 102 Ave	Active	HRET attended camp at 96St 102 Ave and spoke to ^{17(1) 17(4)} He was evicted immediately due to repeated disregard towards reasonable alternatives. The camp was overrun with bike parts and garbage. ^{17(1) 17(4)} was given more than reasonable time to vacate and city clean up completed.
22-Jun-2022	22438271	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	99 st/ 106 st	Active	HRET helped BEATS with small reoccupation across from Hope. 1 GOA and 2 occupied with two occupants, occupants gathered belongings and left area. 17(1) 17(4) had a HELP flag notified them of her whereabouts.
22-Jun-2022	22438183	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, M ke	Downtown	105Av / 95 St	Active	Attended Community Gardens for scheduled clean and closure of area. 10 structures cleaned and removed by City Ops. No remaining occupants at site wished to have any outreach supports or services police had to offer and were well aware of the services available to them nearby.
22-Jun-2022	22438443	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	Dawson Ravine	Active	HRET returned to move an encampment as prior request to move have not left, encampment has grown with the amount of belongings, drug pipes and syringes. Occupants moved their belongings and city operations started clean up and remove structures prior to storm moving into area. The area will be cleaned once weather improves.
24-Jun-2022	22442753	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, M ke	Downtown	95 St / 106 Av	Active	Large encampment comprised of 8 structures. 4 additional structures on private property adjacent to encampment. 2 Peace Officers attended to provide verbal notice of inevitable closure. All structures currently abandoned. No city operation clean up crews available at this time for immediate closure, it will be scheduled for closure when city operations clean up crews become available.
25-Jun-2022	22445138	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	9536 106 av	Active	HRET attended an illegal encampment in a regular encampment spot. 12 Community members were moved along along with 9 structures removed and lots cleaned. No supports were accept but community members provided time, water and bags to help them. Outreach workers spoke with 2 groups with additional food. Many spoke about being on housing lists or going to the Bissell to get a worker. 2 neighbors attended the lot and gave us praise for removing tents, one unknown male stopped his car and took video for a minute and yelled that we were racist and left with no confrontation.
26-Jun-2022	22447697	2991 Cst. BEELER, Dave	Downtown	George Spady Centre	Active	HRET attended a multiple tent community east of the Spady Center. 6 persons were located and 5 Structures. Of concern was the safety of the community members as there were directly adjacent to an active construction site. All were cooperative in moving, city cleanup crews contacted. No resources were accepted as all were well versed in supports available
26-Jun-2022	22448470	2931 A/Sgt. DeROCHER, Travis	Downtown	106Ave 93 St	Active	HRET attended 106Ave 93 St to give notice to community members city cleanup crews were coming the next morning. All persons were cooperative and appreciated being advised ahead of time
27-Jun-2022	22449805	2991 Cst. BEELER, Dave	Downtown	Mcdougall Hill	Active	HRET attended McDougall Hill for a citizen complaint of encampments 2 persons were located and agreed to move encampments. City cleanup crews will need a significant amount of resources to clear away older abandoned camps not associated with todays event.
27-Jun-2022	22450645	2991 Cst. BEELER, Dave	Downtown	McDougall Hill Funicular	Active	HRET attended the top of the Funicular behind the McDonald Hotel. A female who identified herself as 17(1) 17(4) was located and advised there were many complaints called into the Oark Ranger office even though she had only been there for 1 day. ^{17(1) 17(4)} was unable to determine where she could go and refused to use shelters due to safety concerns as a single female. HELP was contacted and arrived to help facilitate her moving her belongings to a relatives place where she would be safe. Follow up to be conducted through HELP.
28-Jun-2022	22452297	2991 Cst. BEELER, Dave	Downtown	Mary Burlie Park	Active	HRET attended Mary Burlie Park for a huge encampment that stretched from the park east along the walkway between the walkway along the EPS parking lot. Approximately 35 people were located in 21 separate encampments. Information collected suggests a large amount of campers were at the Hope for breakfast so the total amount actually utilizing this space was much higher. HELP was asked to attend and spoke to two people identified by HRET as being possibly open to resources but were refused. City cleanup crews utilized and

						resources but were required. City cleanup crews utilized and garbage removed
28-Jun-2022	22452879	2991 Cst. BEELER, Dave	Downtown	CoE Lot @ 9542 106 Ave	Active	HRET attended the COE lot at 95 St 106 Ave for a repeat encampment 8 tents were moved by community members and city clean up crews attended to remove left over garbage.
29-Jun-2022	CPO Event	CPO KOBAYASHI, Pamela	Downtown	Kinnard Ravine	Active	HRET members attended 76 Street / 110 Avenue for a reported encampment garnering a large volume of complaints. Officers spoke with the lone occupant whom we have frequent interactions with. He is well connected with multiple outreach, housing, and health agencies, and declined transport to a shelter. He was asked to vacate the area, and did as requested without incident. Presumed stolen property was observed on site. City Operations attended and removed one truckload of materials the occupant wished to part with. Numerous residents approached officers thanking them for their prompt response to their complaints.
30-Jun-2022	22456832	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	CoE Lot @ 9542 106 Ave	Active	HRET reattend the Edmonton lot and private property lot that is reoccupied with 22 structures. Many community members are the same from last eviction last week. Over 30 community members in the encampment. No services wanted at this time
2-Jul-2022	22462650	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, M ke	Downtown	78 St / 112S Av	Active	Assist d div patrol with call for service as requested by OSM. Lone structure located with 3 occupants. No high risk concerns, Neighbourhood complaints for vagrancy. Provided 5 days in which to meet with housing services
3-Jul-2022	22464343	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	106 Ave/ 96 St	Active	HRET attended a reported illegal encampment in a playground area. Evidence of fire in one tent that was not occupied. One community member identified and stated she already had services and would move along. Area cleared by city operations.
3-Jul-2022	22464387	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	107 St/ 109 Ave	Active	HRET attended a reported illegal encampment in a playground area. Two occupants identified and cleaned their belongings and left the area with no further clean up needed.
3-Jul-2022	22464952	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	112 St/ 98 Av	Active	HRET attended a reported encampment. The 2 occupants were advised they need to leave by the following day. Low impact to area.
4-Jul-2022	22466533	2991 Cst. BEELER, Dave	Downtown	Mary Burlie Park	Active	HRET attended Mary Burlie to assist in clearing out repeat occupations of the park. 3 tents and 5 community members were asked to move on and cooperated. Of note, the park was the scene of a drug overdose death the previous day.
6-Jul-2022	22471433	2991 Cst. BEELER, Dave	Downtown	Community Gardens	Active	HRET attended the Community gardens and proceeded to engage with the encampment community. There were 30+structures some of significant size. Of note, 1 community member ^{17(1) 17(4)} was being visited by an housing outreach worker who was taking her to sign a lease. ^{17(1) 17(4)} was not located nor did she return while HRET was at the site. The area required significant resources to clean and required almost the whole shift to properly close. Community members were generally cooperative but refused services when asked. 9 Truckloads of waste and 111 used syringes were removed from the site.
7-Jul-2022	22474930	2991 Cst. BEELER, Dave	Downtown	110Av 110 St	Active	HRET attended St Mary Catherine School and located 2 encampments. Both encampments were closed and tents removed by community members. Resources were refused as all were aware of resources available.
8-Jul-2022	22476503	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, M ke	Downtown	7905 112a Av	Active	Scheduled closure. Single structure, with 2 individuals. Both have been previously placed in contact with supports and declined. City ops attended to clean site.
8-Jul-2022	22476807	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, M ke	Downtown	11100 Stadium Rd	Active	Scheduled closure. Lone female occupant with 2 structures. Previously offered and declined supports. City ops attended to remove debris.
9-Jul-2022	22479085	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	110 St/ 110 Ave	Active	HRET responded to a report of an illegal encampment near a playground. 2 structures found, 1 abandoned, 2 occupants identified and moved along. No supports wanted at this time.
9-Jul-2022	22478982	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, M ke	Downtown	10437 97 St	Active	Scheduled clean up for Marie Burle and area. 7 structures removed by city operations. Mustard Seed support staff in attendance, all supports available, none taken.
9-Jul-2022	22469168	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	104 Av/ 118 St	Active	HRET responded to an illegal encampment in a playground zone. One occupant found with structure tucked away. Provided until the following morning to clean up structure and move locations.
9-Jul-2022	22479918	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	River Valley Rd/ west of High Level Bridge	Active	HRET responded to illegal encampment on the island west of the High Level Bridge along side River Valley Rd. Occupant found and since the tent had been mostly flattened by the river he stays at the Hope. Has services and given time to get belongs out of tent.
11-Jul-2022	22483453	2593 Cst.	Downtown	10021 95 st	Active	5 structure encampment. Low-moderate risk. supports offered

		TAYLOR, M ke				Structure encampment with moderate risk, supports offered and declined. Provided with 7 days to clean and move on from immediate area.
11-Jul-2022	22483445	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	Mary Burlie Park	Active	HRET attended a reported illegal encampment at Mary Burlie park. Dug in structure west side of 97 St in trees. 2 tents and tarp structure on site cleaned. All occupants left without issue.
14-Jul-2022	22005217	2991 Cst. BEELER, Dave	Downtown	Bissell Centre / 105 Ave	Active	HRET attended the Bissel Center and completed cleanup/closure effort of 32 illegal encampments. All occupants were aware to vacate the location and refused outreach. Outreach teams were made aware prior to cleanup as well. City crews attended and took away approximately 18 truckloads of garbage. 196 needles were collected during the 4.5 hour cleanup.
16-Jul-2022	22495999	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, M ke	Downtown	108 Av / 117 St	Active	Located single structure with lone female occupant. Offered and declined supports. Immediate closure due to open drug use, exposed needles, less than 100 feet from a playground. City ops attended to remove debris.
17-Jul-2022	22488164	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	106 Ave/ 106 St	Active	HRET attended the report of an illegal encampment with multiple complaints. 6 structures 11 occupants. All parties cleaned their areas and left without issue. Small amount of garbage to clean up and completed by city operations.
17-Jul-2022	22498272	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	105 St/ 108 Av @Princess of Wales Armoury	Active	HRET responded to an illegal encampment and found one structure. Spoke with occupants who move every day and were cleaning up without issue. No clean up needed.
18-Jul-2022	22498401	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, M ke	Downtown	sask drive / high level bridge	Active	Lone structure. Very clean and tidy sent to ERT to make contact for possible supports.
18-Jul-2022	22483443	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, M ke	Downtown	LRT Bridge/ Cameron Dr @ Louise McKINNEY Park	Active	HRET re attended to close the illegal encampment. When arrived all structures were dismantled with large garbage piles made by occupants. Large areas of hillside were cut into for placement of tents. All occupants refused services and left without issue. Area cleaned by city operations.
19-Jul-2022	22592583	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	100 Av/ 95 St @ Community Gardens	Active	HRET attended the report of an illegal encampment with not the 16 structures and over 30 occupants. Eviction was provided the day prior with some groups cleaning up when we arrived. Downtown HELP was utilized for 2 occupants freshly on the streets to get placed on lists for housing. The area was cleaned with Park Rangers sitting at the site after it was cleaned to deter new encampments.
19-Jul-2022	22003981	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	106 Av/ 96 St	Active	HRET attended the report of an illegal encampment with over 10 structures on city and private property police have agent status. Outreach attended handing out food but no one wanted any more help then what they are receiving. Area cleaned. The area was cleaned with Park Rangers sitting at the site after it was cleaned to deter new encampments.
22-Jul-2022	22509873	2991 Cst. BEELER, Dave	Downtown	RCMP K-Division	Active	HRET attended the field directly west of KDivision to a reported encampment. HRET spoke to 17(1) 17(4) and 17(1) 17(4) who stated they were camping there for safety, sharing a fence with the RCMP. They were connected with Homeward Trust and were working on housing. They were given until 22JUL23 to vacate the area.
23-Jul-2022	22511995	2991 Cst. BEELER, Dave	Downtown	Airways Park	Active	HRET attended Airways Park for a follow up from the previous day. 17(1) 17(4) were given until today's date to remove their tent. They were found to have been joined by another tent with 17(1) 17(4) HRET stood by while both camps were removed by occupants.
24-Jul-2022	22514224	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	105 Av/ 95 St	Active	HRET attended a report of an illegal encampment. 1 structure with 2 occupants provided time to clean up structure and vacate area. No clean up required.
24-Jul-2022	22514316	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	112 av/ Stadium Rd	Active	HRET observed a structure tied off to a fence in a main area for events next to the commonwealth. 1 occupant and structure stated she camped there as there is security in the area for her own safety. Area cleared with no clean up needed.
26-Jul-2022	22516380	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, M ke	Downtown	105 Av / 116 St	Active	Structure located using cemetery fencing as a brace causing significant emotional damage to families attending to deceased burial sites. Used fire pit observed as well as syringes consistent with street level drug use. Occupant offered and declined supports. Coop and departed after cleaning his area.
26-Jul-2022	22518708	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, M ke	Downtown	113 St / 99 Av	Active	HRET members assisted single patrol member responding to a reported weapons complaint. After initial engagement with the occupants a sawed off shotgun was recovered. The Occupants of the camp were dealt with by attending patrol members. The camp was cleared immediately as it met numerous criteria for being high risk. Syringes, fire pits

						numerous items for being high risk. Cyntrios, the pits, defecation were also visible when approaching.
26-Jul-2022	22519262	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	River Valley Rd/123 St	Active	HRET attended a reported illegal encampment. Upon locating encampment it was found to be active but no one on scene. Set for closure the following day due to the lack of city operations.
26-Jul-2022	22519362	2593 Cst. TAYLOR, Mike	Downtown	90 St / Jasper Av	Active	Sonny provided with 24 hours to move encampment due to numerous complaints. Admitted drug user but no overt evidence of drug use or fire pits. Resources are currently being sought from Boyle.
27-Jul-2022	22520829	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	79 St / 112 Ave	Active	HRET attended the report of an illegal encampment. Upon arriving 2 structures with 4 community members spoken with. 17(1) 17(4) stated they are moving to Calgary on July 30 to live with his sister with her boyfriend picking them up in Edmonton. Other couple given to Aug 2 to move along so clean up of area can take place.
28-Jul-2022	22523496	2991 Cst. BEELER, Dave	Downtown	Hope Mission	Active	HRET assisted in the regular cleanup of the Hope mission area which took the morning. Community members were cooperative and city operations attended to facilitate the cleanup efforts. This was a joint effort involving Beats, Park Rangers and HRET.
29-Jul-2022	22526404	2991 Cst. BEELER, Dave	Downtown	96st 104av	Active	HRET along with Disruption and Cst. JARVIS and Cst. TORRES from DDIV beats attended the bike path between lots 2 and 3 north of headquarters. A large group had occupied nearly the entire bike path from 96 St to Mary Burlie Park. No one wanted supports and all community members packed up their belongings leaving refuse for the city ops crew to clean up.
30-Jul-2022	22528344	2931 A/Sgt. DeROCHER, Travis	Downtown	Community Gardens	Active	HRET attended the Community Gardens (15 encampments) NE of the downtown pumps and the Laid lot which is west of DDIV pumps (15 encampments). This area is repeatedly occupied by are community members requiring significant cleanup up resources. Community members were cooperative and assisted in downsizing many of their encampments. Of note two community members were found by CPO KOBAYASHI and CPO HANSEN to be overdosing after injecting in their tent. HRET and Peace Officers administered Narcan for both and EMS attended. Both recovered with one walking away and the other left the scene via EMS. The clean up took the entire morning and few hours into the afternoon.
31-Jul-2022	22530756	2931 A/Sgt. DeROCHER, Travis	Downtown	LRT Pathway (between 95st/96st)	Active	HRET and Peace Officers conducted a closure of the LRT path between 96 St and 95 St. There were 26 encampments along the path which were removed without issue. Peace Officers assisted with closing the path way to limit movement on the path so City Operations had more room to work and maneuver their trucks. One CPO was approached by 17(1) 17(4) (did not belong to any encampment) who was trying to walk down the path. CPO denied him access at which time the male pull out what was originally believed to be edged weapon and threatened to kill the CPO (weapon determined to be the end of pen). 17(1) 17(4) continued to yell threats and was able to push the CPO in the chest with his hand at which time he was taken to ground and held until HRET members arrived to assist in handcuffing. 17(1) 17(4) was transported to DDIV cells where he was lodge on a single count of Assault with a weapon. Of note, 17(1) 17(4) is known to the CPO and other Peace Officers 17(1) 17(4). HRET MEMEBERS had no use of force and the CPC 17(1) 17(4)
2-Aug-2022	22528917	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	82 Av/ 112 St	Active	Reattended encampment for clean up. Encampment was still active with large mess. Occupants provided 2hrs to clean up and gather belongings due to City Operations working on other large clean up. CPO's stayed with City Operations once occupants left area.
3-Aug-2022	22537991	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	112 St/ 98 Av	Active	HRET attended the report of an illegal encampment. Large one structure with one occupant. Provided eviction date to allow him to contact housing worker and relocate.
3-Aug-2022	22538167	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	106 Av/ 107 St	Active	HRET attended reports of illegals encampments. 4 structures with 3 occupants identified. Clean area but is reoccupied multiple times. Proved August 6 for moving date. 2 names to be given to ERT.
4-Aug-2022	22539818	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	103 Av/ 96 St	Active	HRET responded to the report of an illegal encampment. Encampment has grown over past week due to other moves in the area. due to rain the group was given to the following day

		Chris				the area, due to rain the group was given to the following day to move for clean up.
4-Aug-2022	22539877	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	95 St /105 Sv	Active	HRET attended a report of an illegal encampment. One large structure with 2 occupants asked to move sometime this morning. Occupants advised they are packed inside and will move when rain slows.
4-Aug-2022	22539894	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	Rowland Rd/ 95 St	Active	HRET attended the report of an encampment and others living in an abandoned building owned by the city. Encampment cleaned and building searched so can be reboarded by maintenance.
4-Aug-2022	22539894	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	Rowland Rd/ 95 St	Active	HRET responded to an illegal encampment and break and enter to abandoned building on city property. Encampment was cleared for cleaning and abandoned building cleared for public safety so it could be re boarded up.
4-Aug-2022	22540100	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	9530 104 Av	Active	HRET attended the location due to reported illegal encampment. 2 structures found with occupants. Provided time to clean up are. No clean up required.
5-Aug-2022	22542204	2991 Cst. BEELER, Dave	Downtown	121 St Airport Rd	Active	HRET attended the city owned lot west of the Nova Hotel for a follow up from the previous set. Occupants were advised last week to leave the property and had previously agreed to start moving their camp. Upon return the camp was observed to have grown in size with no efforts made to vacate. HRET stood by while occupants collected their things and city ops cleaned up a significant amount of garbage.
6-Aug-2022	22544318	2931 A/Sgt. DeROCHER, Travis	Downtown	Bissell Centre / 105 Ave	Active	HRET conducted a closure at the Bissell of 30 encampments. During the closure HRET members were approached by a male who advised there was a male who was unconscious in the alley east of 97 St. The male was located, not breathing with purple lips, face and hands and had a faint heart beat. 3 doses of Narcan were given to the subject who came too. The male was from the encampments that were being closed. EMS was called by HRET members however, the SBJ refused EMS. One bike was seized and believed stolen. Manufacture was contacted via email for ownership. Follow up will be conducted once it's determined who owns the bike.
7-Aug-2022	22546729	2973 Cst. RESSLER, Darcy	Downtown	103 Ave / 96 St	Active	Attended a large multi structure encampment near 103 Ave and 96 St. HRET members responded to 2 reported overdoses while on scene, 1 SJ given narcan and left with EMS, another was simply sleeping. All encampment occupants packed up and vacated the area for COE clean up crew to restore the area to its natural state.
8-Aug-2022	22003981	2931 A/Sgt. DeROCHER, Travis	Downtown	94 St/106 Ave	Active	HRET attended the Laid lot on 86St 106 Ave as well as Community Gardens for a coordinated cleanup. Occupants were advised the day prior of the cleanup and were generally cooperative. A large number of camps were removed by the occupants and city ops facilitated the cleanup efforts.
8-Aug-2022	22538167	2973 Cst. RESSLER, Darcy	Downtown	106 Ave 107 St	Active	Attended a multi structure encampment in the green space on 106 Ave at 107 st. All occupants had been given advanced notice and vacated the area voluntarily for COE clean up crews to restore the green space back to its original state.
10-Aug-2022	CPO event	CPO KOBAYASHI, Pamela	Downtown	106 St/ 110 Av	Active	HRET attended the report of an illegal encampment in a playground area. It was believed all occupants lied about their identity and left the area which was cleaned by city operations
11-Aug-2022	22555739	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	106 Av / 107 St	Active	HRET attended the report of an illegal encampment and found 3 structures with occupants. Due to reoccupation they were given until the afternoon to vacate the area for cleaning.
11-Aug-2022	22556129	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	Victoria Park @ 97Av / 112 St	Active	HRET attended the reported illegal encampment as a new path is running along side of it, SJ gathered a few things and left the area with out putting out his fire that needed to be distinguished, city operations for clean up but active construction in the area would not allow for immediate clean up
12-Aug-2022	22558027	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	94 St/106 Ave	Active	HRET attended the Community Gardens location again and after giving all 13 occupants 24 hrs notice to vacate yesterday none had chosen to leave. HRET stood by while all occupants packed their belongings and left with the remaining waste being cleaned by City operations. 13 structures were closed in total. No occupants wish to have any outreach assistance and were well aware of the resources available to them nearby.
12-Aug-2022	22558578	3163 A/Sgt. McFARLANE, Chris	Downtown	Queen Mary Park	Active	HRET attended at encampment after eviction notice had been served. 9 structures/tents taken down. Numerous people moved along. Offered services but did not accept any. All items left behind collected by City clean up for destruction. Water handed out at location due to warm weather.
14-Aug-2022	22562930	2973 Cst. RESSLER, Darcy	Downtown	96 St / 102 Ave	Active	Attended 96 St and 102 Ave for the scheduled clean up of a large, multi structure encampment. All occupants complied willingly and vacated the area for COE crews to clean and

		Darcy				willingly and vacated the area for OCE crews to clean and restore the site back to its original state.
14-Aug-2022	22563392	2973 Cst. RESSLER, Darcy	Downtown	10830 109 St	Active	Attended an on view encampment up against the wall of St Joseph's high school after patrol members arrested a female occupant for an unrelated weapons complaint. Male occupant was asked to pack up and vacate, done willingly, no property left behind, no follow up required.

[Open source report to view more](#)

Downtown Encampment Statistics (22MAY01 - 22SEP03)

Primary	Number of Structures	Number of Structures Closed	# of Camps GOA/Sent for Clean Up	# of File Numbers Generated	# of High Risk Camps	# of Moderate Risk Camps	# of Low Risk Camps	# of Extreme Risk Camps	Date
Total	Sum 1196	Sum 1092	Sum 240	Sum 306	Sum 672	Sum 33	Sum 6	Sum 22	

Law Enforcement Statistics (22MAY01-22SEP03)

Primary	# of Warrants Executed	# of Charges Laid	# of J444	Property Recovered (Value)	Drugs Seized (Value)	Knives Seized	Other Weapons Seized
Total	Sum 32	Sum 0	Sum 0	Sum \$5,000	Sum \$0	Sum 89	Sum 19

This is Exhibit "I" referred to in the Affidavit of
Devyn Ens, sworn this 15th day of September, 2023

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Wirbe", written over a horizontal line.

CHRISTOPHER WIRBE
LAWYER



EDMONTON
POLICE
SERVICE

9620 – 103A AVENUE
EDMONTON, ALBERTA
CANADA T5H 0H7
PH: 780-421-3333
www.edmontonpolice.ca

File No: PSB2023-0435
May 31, 2023

Chris Wiebe
Engel Law Office
Suite 200 Wentworth Building
10209 97 Street NW 204
Edmonton, AB T5J 0L6
chris@engellaw.ca

Dear Chris Wiebe:

Re: Citizen Complaint

This letter is to advise you of the disposition in relation to your complaint about Edmonton Police Service policy and services regarding encampment clearings in Boyle-McCauley.

Your complaint, submitted August 9, 2022, was classified under section 44(1) of the *Alberta Police Act* as to the policies and services provided by the Edmonton Police Service and was reviewed by the Edmonton Police Service Professional Standards Branch.

Summary of Complaint

The details of your complaint are as follows:

1. EPS lacks a policy about how much notice EPS officers must give to people who occupy encampments, before displacing them from their encampments. Sometimes EPS provides between 24 hours and a week's notice, but often EPS provides an hour or less notice;
2. EPS lacks a policy about preserving the personal items of people whose encampments the EPS clears. Instead, the EPS characterizes all items that people are unable to carry with them at the time that EPS City of Edmonton Peace Officers displaces them, as "abandoned property" or "debris" and those items are disposed of. The EPS must do better to ensure that they preserve all displaced peoples' property; and
3. EPS's services in regularly displacing homeless encampments in the Boyle-McCauley area, including at 9555 106 Avenue, causes loss of housing, dignity, and property to the people displaced. The EPS's practice of frequently displacing encampments in Boyle-McCauley is a cruel and ineffective response to homelessness in that area. It is also a means to pretense policing that targets unhoused people. It provides a convenient context in which EPS officers check IDs and execute warrants.

In your complaint you refer to several incidents from 2021 involving the actions or notations of police officers. As this is a complaint of service and not a complaint of conduct, this review will address these concerns at face value and speak to current services provided.

Key Findings

The EPS High Risk Encampment Team (HRET) has worked closely with the City of Edmonton and the Park Rangers in establishing the following guidelines. These guidelines are intended to assist in a consistent response and understanding of the roles and procedures when EPS is dealing with small and large groups of people camping outside on public lands.

1. When an encampment has been identified and does not require immediate intervention:
 - Identify any occupants.
 - Conduct a hazard assessment for hazardous materials / biohazard / weapons / fire, etc.
 - Create an occurrence and submit an initial report to document the interaction.
 - Update the individual's address in EPROS to that of the address of their encampment.
 - Consider any enforceable actions (i.e. warrants, violation tickets).
 - If active, contact HELP and/or 211 Crisis Diversion if non-emergent help is needed.
 - To report the encampment, call 311 or contact through the 311 app. The 311 app can share location and photos.
 - Provide event number should EPS be required to conduct a stand-by for Park Rangers.
 - Do not remove, destroy, alter or contaminate any of the property.

2. The assessment:
 - High Risk Encampment Team (HRET) will attend the location, assess the camp based on a matrix scoring system and give the encampment a removal date. This date can range anywhere from immediate to 26 days.
 - HRET will contact Outreach Services to attend the camps to offer support.
 - HRET will return at the determined removal date and evict occupant(s) if required and arrange clean-up of the abandoned camp belongings.
 - Only trained and equipped City Operations (Clean Up Crew) will dismantle the encampments. This may take anywhere from a day to a couple of weeks depending on staffing, weather, workload and the size of the encampment.
 - In extreme weather situations, encampments will be permitted to remain in place (unless High Risk) and welfare checks will be conducted.

3. High-Risk:

Occasionally, EPS will encounter high-risk encampments that pose an immediate danger to the occupants and surrounding community. Those situations must be assessed on a case-by-case basis and acted on appropriately. A high-risk encampment can include an encampment that is situated in a dangerous location, open fires that are likely to cause personal injury, property damage, near a playground, etc. When members deal with a high-risk encampment and need to take immediate action, they need to document the event and notify the City through the 311 app to coordinate a site clean-up.

4. Private Property Encampment:

Prior to Police involvement, the private property owner must:

- Advise the encampment occupants that they are trespassing on private property when appropriate.
- The private property owner is responsible for the site clean-up if applicable.

Police response to private property encampment complaints:

- Generate a file number and document the occurrence and details of the event. Ensure all parties involved are linked to the occurrence.
- Ensure that the encampment occupants have been asked to leave the property.
- Inform the encampment occupants that they must leave the property. Consider Agent Status if applicable.
- The primary role of the EPS is to keep the peace and ensure public safety.

This is usually accomplished in a standby request and seeking voluntary compliance to vacate.

- Arresting / charging for trespassing and/or mischief remains an option if compliance is not possible.
- Provide the encampment occupants with an opportunity to collect their belongings and vacate the property.
- Inform the encampment occupants of the shelter and outreach options available to them

The role of EPS is to assist the City of Edmonton and citizens in the encampment clean-up process. All encampments on public land are assessed by risk and placed on a risk matrix developed by the City of Edmonton and scheduled for removal based on the identified risk. Thus, the amount of notice provided in relation to encampment removal dates is necessarily variable based on the assessed risk.

The City of Edmonton Park Rangers make the call on what is abandoned and what City Operations can clean. HRET will assist and coordinate those efforts when required.

The authority of the City, and thus the EPS, is different and limited with respect to private property encampment complaints.

Encampments in Edmonton are reported by citizens and EPS by calling 311 or accessing the 311 app. Through strategic EPS proactive enforcement, and partnership with the City of Edmonton, the EPS conducts coordinated proactive patrols in and around encampments to address crime and disorder, reduce victimization, and connect people that require inter-agency assistance.

Conclusion

We appreciate you raising your concerns, and genuinely believe these guidelines will protect the rights of all citizens.

This matter relates to policy and services provided by the Edmonton Police Service and not the conduct of any specific EPS member. After examining current EPS guidelines relating to encampments, there does not appear to be any need for amendment or change as a result of this complaint. Based on this assessment, I am of the opinion no further action is required, and your policy and service complaint as outlined above is considered concluded.

Page 4

Pursuant to section 44(3) of the *Police Act*, you have the right to appeal the determination of this complaint to the Edmonton Police Commission, #1803 Rice Howard Place, Tower Two, 10060 Jasper Avenue NW, Edmonton, Alberta, T5J 3R8. The appeal must be filed within thirty (30) days of the date upon which you were advised of the determination of the complaint.

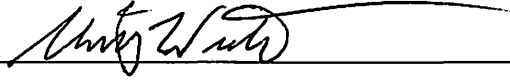
Regards,



Darren Derko
Acting Chief of Police
Edmonton Police Service

cc: Ms. Deanna Matchett, Public Complaint Director & Legal Counsel
Edmonton Police Commission

This is Exhibit "3" referred to in the Affidavit of
Devyn Ens, sworn this 15th day of September, 2023



CHRISTOPHER WIEBE
LAWYER

Narrative

#3373 SALAME, W. Followup 2021/09/09 06:55

1. On September 05, 2021 HRET Team #2 attended the Laid Lot located at the address of 9555 106 Avenue, Edmonton Alberta. This encampment was occupied by 5 person(s). 5 tent(s) were observed at this location, one of which was abandoned. Uncapped needles, human feces, open alcohol, drug paraphernalia, evidence of recent fires, and a large amount of debris were noted. In addition, this area is known for high crime and disorder.

2. Occupants were given 60 minutes to collect essential items and vacate the area. Outreach was available through the Bissell Centre for anyone who chose to seek these resources. It should be noted that majority of the occupants encountered in this location are occupants that are spoken to / evicted on an almost daily basis in the downtown core. Many of these occupants are offered resources, however, offered resources are refused. Outreach provided by the Mustard Seed was noted to be walking through the area and were not overly pleased with police presence in this area. Attempts to conversate with these outreach workers to provide education/information were made, however, these outreach workers were not interested in speaking with police.

This section contains internal task logs generated by the EPS records management system. The Task Activity Log includes entries generated by the EPS records management system on behalf of the member. In places where currently gathered data was not gathered at the time of reporting, "Field not in use" will appear. All other data appears without modification.

TASK ACTIVITY LOG	(as of 2021/10/18	09 34	20211018 15 34 15 155 UTC)
Task#	T210674851		
Task Type	Followup		Initially Assigned To #3373 SALAME, W.
Initiated Date	2021/09/05	16 28	Initiated By #3373 SALAME, W.
Opened Date	2021/09/05	16 28	
Completed Date	2021/09/05	16 32	
Task Approved Date	2021/09/09	06 55	Approved By #2421 DREILICH, M.
Reworked	No		
Time / H Time	2021/09/05	16 28	20210905 22 28 41 993 UTC
Activity Log Notes	(#3373 SALAME, W.) Task assigned to #3373 SALAME, W.		
Time / H Time	2021/09/05	16 28	20210905 22 28 42 053 UTC
Activity Log Notes	(#3373 SALAME, W.) Changed: Due date from '2021/09/06 16:28' to '2021/09/06 04:28'		
Time / H Time	2021/09/05	16 28	20210905 22 28 42 087 UTC
Activity Log Notes	(#3373 SALAME, W.) <Gateway>		
Current Work Area	60A EB - CRIME SUPPRESSION BRANCH		
Current Supervisor	#2421 DREILICH, M.		
Member Call Back to Complainant Completed	True		
Incident Involved Domestic Violence	False		
Family Violence Investigation Needed	False		
Family Violence Investigation Report Completed	* Field not in use		
Control Tactics Report Created	False		
Gang Involvement	* Field not in use		
Hate Crime	* Field not in use		
Confidential Human Source Involved	False		
Information Obtained via Missing Persons Act	False		
Missing Persons Act Report Completed	* Field not in use		
Reasonable Officer Response Report Completed	* Field not in use		
Resulted in Arrest	* Field not in use		
Arrest Occ #	* Field not in use		
Person Contact Info Reviewed	* Field not in use		
Time / H Time	2021/09/05	16 28	20210905 22 28 42 197 UTC
Activity Log Notes	(#3373 SALAME, W.) Task subject was added CA21104219 ProActive Policing [8533] @2021/08/20 10:02 (9555 106 AV, NW, EDMONTON, AB Canada T5H 0N3 (Zone: 2, Community: MCCAUI, Neighbrhd: MCCAUI, Division: DOWN, District: D1, Beat: D792)) (*****HRET MASTER FILE FOR CITY / LA D LOT***** / Master Encamp		

Author: #3373 SALAME, W.

This is Exhibit "K" referred to in the Affidavit of
Devyn Ens, sworn this 15th day of September, 2023



CHRISTOPHER WIRBE
LAWYER

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Alberta is on fire: The wildfire situation Thursday and where to find evacuation orders

AD

WEATHER

City of Edmonton activates extreme weather response



By **Emily Mertz** • Global News

Posted November 29, 2022 10:21 am



A cold snap in Edmonton saw temperatures dip to the -30s February 2019. Global News



-A A+

UPDATE: The city extended the extreme weather activation to Dec. 26 at 8 a.m. and if conditions remain extremely cold, it may be extended again.

The city activated its **extreme weather response** at 8 a.m. Tuesday to keep vulnerable Edmontonians safe during this cold snap. It's expected to remain

in place until Thursday, Dec. 8, at 8 a.m.

The response is triggered when the wind chill makes temperatures feel like -20 C for at least three consecutive nights and shelter utilization rates are over 90 per cent.

The extreme weather response includes transit, expanded overnight shelter, day services and warming buses.

Dedicated overnight Edmonton Transit Service bus routes to take people to shelters between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. ETS will stop at all bus stops to pick up anyone waiting when the weather is -20 C and below with wind chill.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW ADVERTISEMENT

Al Rashid Mosque (13070-113 Street) is offering 75 overnight spaces to shelter people during the extreme weather response.

“Being caring and compassionate for one’s fellow human beings is a central part of Islam,” said Sadique Pathan, the Al Rashid Mosque Outreach Imam. “The existence of countless homeless citizens in Edmonton points to the need for all of us to step up and lend a helping hand.”

3:19

Edmonton weather forecast: Tuesday, November 29, 2022

Bissell Centre will operate its community space seven days a week, 10 hours a day (9 a.m. to 7 p.m.), where people can access supports like laundry, showers, meals, Indigenous cultural supports, mental health resources and housing resources.

Trending Now

Calgary senior with terminal illness receives refund after calling out Manulife over denied claim



Air Canada says expect flight delays, cancellations as it fixes technical issue



Boyle Street Community Services will operate its community centre seven days per week, 11 hours a day (8 a.m. to 7 p.m.), where people can access housing supports, Indigenous cultural supports and showers.

STORY CONTINUES BELOW ADVERTISEMENT

The Winter Warming Bus, operated by Boyle Street Community Services, is offering food, winter clothing, blankets and transportation to warming centres and shelters.

The Encampment Response Team will conduct wellness checks.

All Edmonton Public Library locations and recreation facilities will be open to the public for warming purposes during regular operating hours.

The city will **not be opening LRT stations as part of the extreme weather response**. "LRT stations are not appropriate shelter space as they lack amenities such as heat, and adequate washroom facilities," the city said in a news release.

If Edmontonians notice someone suffering from hypothermia (uncontrollable shivering, drowsiness or exhaustion, confusion, fumbling hands, memory loss, or slurred speech; or unconscious), they should call 911 for someone in serious distress or in cases of emergency or call 211 and press 3 for 24-7 Crisis Diversion non-emergency support for shelter, intoxication and mental health.

MORE ON CANADA

- **Air Canada says expect flight delays, cancellations as it fixes technical issue**

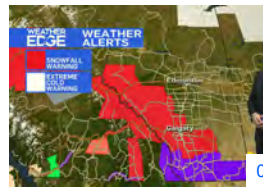
EDMONTON | News

Edmonton activates extreme weather response Monday



02:08 ▶

Social agencies prepare for cold snap



01

Cold today... but very cold tom through Friday morning

Diego Romero
CTVNewsEdmonton.ca Senior Digital Producer
[Contact](#)

Published Feb. 19, 2023 5:14 p.m. MST

Share



With colder temperatures on the forecast in the coming week, the City of Edmonton is activating its extreme weather response to help vulnerable citizens.

The coldest days are expected to be Wednesday, Thursday and Friday, with temperatures as cold as -27 C, CTV News Edmonton's Chief Meteorologist Josh Classen [wrote on Friday](#).

ADVERTISEMENT

"It is going to be dangerously cold for anybody that's out on the streets," he said.

The cold-weather protocol includes [three overnight bus routes](#) to shelters with capacity, day services at The Bissell Centre and Boyle Street Community Services, and wellness checks at encampments.

RELATED STORIES

- ['We are going to fix this': Alberta sends sheriffs downtown to help EPS amid mounting safety concerns](#)
- [36 beds opening in Edmonton for homeless people recently discharged from ER](#)
- [Many Ritchie businesses and residents 'feeling conflicted' about new Boyle Street health hub](#)
- [Amputations due to frostbite on the rise in Edmonton medical zone](#)
- [Alta. mental health and addiction minister criticized for sharing 'false' info on homelessness](#)

The centres will offer laundry, showers, food and mental health support.

"When it gets to extreme cold...the fear of even losing your life, we've lost so many people already, so the fear of losing your life, people are like, 'I gotta get inside,'" said The Bissell Centre's Scarlet Bjornson.

Boyle Street's Winter Warming Bus will also be on the road, giving out food, winter clothes and blankets, and rides to warming centres and shelters.

Local libraries will be open during the day so people can warm up, but LRT stations will not be part of the response.

The city asks residents to call 911, if it's an emergency, or 211 if they see someone in distress.

"Keep mitts and socks and things like that in your vehicle," Bjornson added. "It's really great to donate to our agency or other agencies around town, but if you see someone distressed, have those things with you just to hand to them."

It could save fingers."

The protocol will be in place between 9 a.m. on Monday and 6 a.m. on Sunday.

With files from CTV News Edmonton's Nav Sangha

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EDMONTON | News

Edmonton activates extreme weather response



File. (CTV News Edmonton)

Steven Dyer
CTVNewsEdmonton.ca Digital Producer

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Published March 4, 2023 12:15 p.m. MST

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The City of Edmonton activated its extreme weather response Saturday in order to help keep vulnerable Edmontonians safe.

The response began at 9 a.m. Saturday and is scheduled to last until March 12 at 6 a.m.

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"The threshold for activating the City's extreme weather response is a temperature of -20 degrees celsius with wind chill for at least three consecutive nights, taking into consideration shelter capacity and occupancy rates," said the City in a news release.

As part of the response, ETS will provide dedicated, overnight transportation on three routes between 10 p.m. and 6 a.m. to bring people to shelters with capacity.

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More information on bus routes is available on the city's [website](#).

The Bissell Centre will also continue to operate its community space seven days a week between 9 a.m. and 7 p.m. The community space has showers, meals, and laundry services, along with Indigenous cultural, housing and mental health supports.

The Boyle Street Community Services community centre will also be open seven days a week from 8 a.m. to 7 p.m., providing showers, housing supports and Indigenous cultural supports. Additional space will be available during the extreme weather response, the City added.

Other options available to people include the winter warming bus operated by Boyle Street, which offers food, winter clothing, blankets and transportation to warming centres and shelters.

The Edmonton Transit Service will also be out

Extreme weather response begins Saturday | CTV News
The encampment response team will also be out
conducting wellness checks.


Edmonton Public Library locations and recreation centres
will also be open to the public for warming purposes during
operating hours.

"The City will not be opening LRT stations as part of the
extreme weather response," the City added.

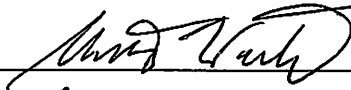
"LRT stations are not appropriate shelter space as they lack
amenities such as heat and adequate washroom facilities."

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**This is Exhibit “ L ” referred to in the Affidavit of
Devyn Ens, sworn this 15th day of September, 2023**

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Wiebe", written over a horizontal line.

CHRISTOPHER WIEBE
LAWYER

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VALUES

Mission Statement

**Hope Mission exists to
serve, strengthen and
uplift men, women,
youth and children
through the life-
changing gospel of
Jesus Christ.**

Statement of Faith

According to the Hope Mission Constitution, all employees and interns must agree to and sign Hope Mission's Statement of Faith.

1. The Scripture of the Old and the New Testament are inspired by God and inerrant in the original writing and are of supreme and final authority in faith and life.
2. One God exists eternally in three persons: Father, Son and Holy Spirit.
3. Man was created in the image of God. He sinned and thereby incurred physical and spiritual death; all human beings are born with a sinful nature.
4. Jesus Christ was begotten by the Holy Spirit, born of the Virgin Mary, and is true God and true Man.
5. The Lord Jesus Christ died for our sins as a substitutionary sacrifice, and all who in repentance receive Him by faith as Savior and Lord are justified through His shed blood, being born again and thereby becoming children of God.
6. The crucified body of the Lord Jesus Christ was raised from the dead. He ascended into heaven and lives there for His own as High Priest and Advocate.
7. The personal and imminent return of Jesus Christ is the believer's hope.

Vision Statement

Hope Mission has a vision that men, women, youth and children who we serve would come to know Jesus Christ as their personal Lord and Savior.

We seek to fulfill this vision by diligently serving, strengthening and uplifting people in the name of Jesus Christ.

Religion that God our Father accepts as pure and faultless is this: to look after orphans and widows in their distress. -James 1:27

Core Values

Out of the purpose and vision of Hope Mission, these values were chosen in order to unify and support the Hope Mission team in fulfilling its mandate. Each staff member is encouraged to uphold these values:

- Strive for excellence
- Demonstrate unconditional love through a gentle, kind and friendly manner
- Inspire, encourage and give hope to those we serve
- Show honesty, integrity and accountability at all times
- Display courage in adversity
- Constantly promote an environment of trust
- Maintain an atmosphere that promotes creativity and innovation
- Respect coworkers, volunteers, clients and Hope Mission as an agency
- Be good stewards of resources, time, money and the earth

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Who We Are

Hope Mission is a not-for-profit Christian social care agency founded in 1929 in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada.

[Discover our story >](#)

Hope begins with a meal.

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CHRISTOPHER WIEBE
LAWYER

https://www.thestar.com/edmonton/dying-for-shelter-one-man-s-life-and-death-on-edmonton-s-streets/article_8c0cf672-a469-5c9c-b0f3-fb848926f002.html

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EDMONTON

Dying for shelter: One man's life and death on Edmonton's streets

Last winter, Heather Legarde's husband Randy died in front of an Edmonton homeless shelter. She says his death shows there's an urgent need for a shift in how we address homelessness.

By Omar Mosleh Star Edmonton



Randy Legarde around the time of his wedding in 2005, left, and after living on the streets for roughly 10 years in about 2017 or 2018. His body was found steps away from a men's shelter in Edmonton's inner city in 2018.

Supplied

EDMONTON—Heather Legarde is holding the ashes of her late husband outside the homeless shelter where he took his last breath.

She is standing at the Herb Jamieson Centre, a men's shelter in Edmonton's inner city, steps away from where Randy Legarde's body was found early on the morning of Nov. 26, 2018.

In her hands is a small heart-shaped urn made of birchbark leather, displaying a flower stitched in white, green and blue porcupine quills. Inside, his ashes are wrapped in fabric made of white deer hide. Randy always loved nature and being outdoors.

The circumstances of his death are not completely clear. Through the medical examiner's office, Legarde learned the cause of death was either an enlarged liver, or issues with his heart or pancreas, all alcohol related.

Edmonton Police say downtown division members were in the area on an unrelated call when they "saw the man lying on the ground in front of the shelter." Alberta Health Services confirmed to Star Edmonton that they found a man's body at the shelter at 6:21 a.m. that morning.

Legarde finds it hard to accept that Randy, 51, died alone directly in front of a homeless shelter. But what bothers her more than the circumstances of his death is that he was outside of that shelter, or others like it, every day for the last 10 years of his life.

"It's not the day he died that's the problem; it's the fact that was (his) best and only option," she said. "If we could have done better than putting people on mats on floor for years and years with no real path out, he wouldn't have died anywhere at that age."

GET TICKETS



Heather Legarde stands at the Herb Jamieson Centre, a homeless shelter in Edmonton where her late husband was found dead on Nov. 26, 2018.

Omar Mosleh/Star Edmonton

So it pains her to know that the Hope Mission, which operates the Herb Jamieson, is planning to build a brand new 24/7 shelter with 400 shelter beds, thanks to an \$8 million commitment from the UCP government, which they are aiming to match with donations. They have raised \$6 million so far. The province is not funding the construction of any new affordable housing projects in Edmonton in its 2019/20 budget and slashed the overall affordable housing budget for capital projects in half, from \$1.2 billion to \$612 million for the next four years.

It doesn't sit well with Legarde.

“The whole let's build a bigger shelter, like are you kidding? All the statistics about homeless people, about the hospital admissions, the drain on police and EMS, and how much they

cost per year if they add up all the services — that is what a shelter mat buys you,” Legarde said.

The Calgary Homeless Foundation estimates it costs about \$35,000 annually to house someone, including with supports. It costs taxpayers about \$95,000 a year to cover emergency services for one homeless individual.

Edmonton’s plan to end homelessness says 900 units of permanent supportive housing, which includes on-site supports for people with addictions, physical or mental disabilities and other complex needs, are required over the next six years.

“Our highest priority on the affordable housing and homelessness front is permanent supportive housing, which we’ve received no money for. The only money that came into Edmonton for housing and homelessness was directly to that shelter,” said Scott McKeen, the Edmonton city councillor for the downtown ward where much of Edmonton’s homelessness is concentrated.

“And I think if they’d asked experts or council members in Edmonton we would have said ‘Well, we could probably use that money in other ways, to better ends.’ ”

He says the provincial government is sending mixed messages by saying they need to reduce costs everywhere else, while funding a homeless shelter without a long-term plan to end homelessness.

“I would suggest there is some hypocrisy in their messaging.”

Edmonton has set aside about \$134 million for affordable housing in its 2019-22 budget, with about \$40 million going toward land for the 900 supportive housing units. They’re asking the province to put in \$124 million to make the dream a reality.

That money remains unaccounted for. The province says its \$619 million capital plan, which is for the entire province over four years, will deliver “2,700 new and regenerated affordable housing units” and also help maintain existing units. Christel Kjenner, Edmonton’s director of housing and homelessness, said the city is hopeful the province will fund future capital projects in Edmonton in next year’s budget.

But it remains to be seen.

Randy, known as Gator on the street, was interviewed by Gareth Hampshire, a former reporter for CBC Edmonton, for a winter clothing drive two years ago.

In the CBC story, posted on Nov. 27, 2017, Legarde is quoted as saying “Without the clothes, we’ll freeze to death.”

Almost one year later, to the day, Randy was found dead.

There are questions that haunt Legarde about Randy’s last night. She says police told her staff at the Herb Jamieson spoke with Randy at about 3 a.m. How was he found dead three hours later?

“I’ve just always wondered about the timeline,” she said in a followup email after meeting with Star Edmonton. “Was he left out there, sick and in a T-shirt, after staff talked to him at 3? Was he invited in and refused? Was he really sick enough to be dead within an hour or two, yet had no symptoms? Did they actually even check on him at all?”

Staring at the reinforced steel doors Randy was reportedly found outside of, she wonders if something could have been done to prevent his death.

“It feels like failure,” Legarde said. “Like we failed him, and we fail everyone else walking down this street past us.

“It makes me sad that this is where people’s stories end.”

Randy Legarde was born on May 6, 1967 in northern Ontario, a member of Long Lake First Nation. He was part of the Sixties Scoop; his biological parents died when he was two and he was split up from all of his siblings except one older brother.

She said his foster family was “abusive and horrible in every possible way.” Legarde carried the scars from his childhood his entire life.

The couple met at church in Winnipeg. Legarde remembers him for his humour, his distinct “half smile” and his blunt manner of speaking.

He enjoyed driving fast, wearing leather jackets and had a deep appreciation for Kentucky Fried Chicken — a fact that made it into his obituary.



Randy Legarde learns how to play video games with his son, David. Despite experiencing homelessness and having an addiction to alcohol, Legarde's wife said he made an effort to stay in his son's life.

Family photo

When Legarde met Randy, he was undertaking a yearlong live-in addictions treatment program at the church. He'd managed to overcome his alcohol addiction, for a time.

One of the things that made her fall in love with him was his big heart. She remembers how he would go out of his way to encourage shy children to attend church programs.

"He really had an eye for people that were left out," she said.

The couple moved to Edmonton and married in 2005. It was a small, intimate gathering, as they didn't have a lot of money. Legarde remembers taking the bus in her wedding dress. But they were happy.

Two years later, she found out she was pregnant. The news seemed to catch Randy off guard.

"It was while I was pregnant that he really went back to drinking. By that time, he was already a few months back into street life and a fairly severe addiction," Legarde said.

Randy had triggers that would remind him of childhood trauma. Parents yelling at their children would cause him to freeze up. He also hated the feeling of being confined — one reason Legarde believes he felt at ease out in the open on the streets.

Randy found comfort in his bible, Legarde said.

"I think it gave him a lot of peace to know that as much as life was out of his control, and never was able to turn out the way he wanted it to in his heart, that there was still someone out there looking out for his best," she said.

Throughout his life, but especially in his final years, Randy turned to alcohol to deal with childhood trauma.

By February 2007, Randy was living on the street. He had been drinking and disappearing for days or weeks at a time for about six months before that. The final straw for Legarde was one day when he came home drunk and got physical with her. He'd never done it before, but it forced her to make a choice and demand that he get help.

For the first year or two when he was experiencing homelessness, he would couch surf, or get an apartment for a few months before losing it. The only constant was his drinking.

In 2017, Randy met Gareth Hampshire, the CBC reporter who now lives in Nova Scotia. One memory that stands out for Hampshire is how Randy would collect gloves, hats and scarves and give them to other people on the street.

"He would be out there carrying a backpack full of warm clothes to help other desperate people," Hampshire said.

He remembers Randy was resigned to a life of homelessness.

"I'm pretty sure he said to me at one point 'No, I don't have any hope to get into housing.' He just learned that that was it."

In an interview with Hampshire, conducted for CBC News two years ago, Randy was brutally honest about his alcohol addiction.

“I depend on the shelters,” Randy says, his voice hoarse, his face weathered. “I depend on these drop-in centres, because I don’t have nothing now. I’m broken. I can’t break the cycle, because I’m a chronic alcoholic.”

Despite his circumstances, Legarde says Randy did make an effort to be a part of their son David’s life. They would meet for lunch, or at the library, where David would teach Randy how to play video games.

“He was not disinterested,” Legarde said. “I think the addiction really robbed him of what he really wanted ... one of the things he wanted more than anything was to get to be the father that he never had.”

About a year before he died, Legarde remembers meeting Randy for lunch in Churchill Square. She was alarmed by his pallor and said he was “kind of yellow.” She asked him if he’d seen a doctor.

“And he said ‘Yeah that’s what I wanted to tell you. I went to the doctor and he said it’s my liver and I need to stop drinking or I’m going to die. And then he just hugged me, and it was really sad.

“Because we both knew he couldn’t stop drinking.”



Vance Whitfield is one of about 500 Edmontonians who choose to sleep outside rather than at local shelters. He is pictured at a homeless camp in the inner city where he lives.

On a chilly November afternoon outside the Hope Mission, a man lies trembling on the cold concrete as a large lunch lineup snakes around the building. No one is alarmed.

A person walking by approaches him and asks him if he's OK. He shakes his head no.

"He needs help! I think he has hypothermia," the passerby screams to a Hope Mission staff member, as another man approaches and lays a brown mink blanket on him.

"He's seizing," a staff member says into a radio handset, before calling 911.

Once they realize the man is in distress, more people move to help and speak with him until an ambulance arrives.

Across the street, Vance Whitfield is shovelling a parking spot, one of the odd jobs he does to get by. Whitfield, originally from the Lac la Biche area, has been living on Edmonton's streets for about eight years. He's one of about 500 Edmontonians who choose to sleep rough rather than in the city's shelters.

He lives in a makeshift homeless encampment situated against a fence near an LRT crossing. The encampment gives him a place to set up his tent and keep a few necessities, but more important to him is the sense of community and camaraderie.

"I stay out here for my bros," Vance says. To him, the inner city community is like a family, with elders on the street serving as folks' moms and dads.

He says one of the main reasons he avoids shelters is because of rules around drugs and alcohol.

"I'd rather stay out here than a place like that, especially with the rules and the people they have enforcing those rules," he said.

"It's not right that they're picking on guys who are drunk or who had it rough and are injured up."

As of January 2019, there were about 1,923 Edmontonians experiencing homelessness. Of those, 25 per cent were unsheltered. Most were men between the ages of 25 and 44. Half identified as Indigenous.

A recent city report found that on any given night, the city's main emergency shelter, the Hope Mission, only reaches 70 per cent capacity.

"People sleeping outside is not unique to Edmonton, but what is unique is the volume of people sleeping outside when there is sufficient capacity within the shelter system on any given night," the report reads.

In contrast, shelters that accommodate people with addictions or mental and physical disabilities routinely meet capacity. The 24/7 intoxication centre at the Hope Mission, known on the streets as the "Snake Pit," is consistently at or over capacity, as are shelter beds at the George Spady Society, which caters to people active in their addiction.

It makes some, like Councillor McKeen, question why the provincial government is funding a new emergency homeless shelter when the existing one is underutilized.

"Already, we have the informal camps because we have hundreds of people saying I'd rather this than that. And that is a problem," McKeen said. "To me ... that's the data that proves that we need to work with Hope Mission to change its operating procedures somewhat."

Hope Mission did not respond to multiple requests for comment.

There are many reasons people choose to sleep outside rather than at the Hope Mission, including feeling unsafe, a lack of privacy, overcrowding, excessive rules and theft. The most common complaint, however, was about the attitude of staff.

Craig Wolfe, a millwright who has been homeless since about 2010, said he chooses to sleep outside because he doesn't like how Hope Mission staff treats clients. He says he's had belongings stolen and that the place is unclean. He showed Star Edmonton a cockroach he says he collected during his time at the Hope.

"They treat you like a third class citizen," Wolfe said, adding that staff will "invent some story" to kick somebody out.

Johnny Lee, who was previously without a home, but is now in stable housing, also said staff seemed to arbitrarily choose who could stay and who had to go.

"If they felt you're disrespecting them ... They'll use that authority and they'll make excuses to kick (people) out," Lee said. " 'Oh, you're drunk, let me smell your breath,' or 'You're abusing

me, as a staff member.’ For even the slightest thing they’ll kick somebody out.”

The reasons given for avoiding shelters are often summed up as the ‘Five Ps’: Partners, possessions, pets, policies and pests.

But there’s a joke in the inner city about another P that is left out — Proselytizing.



Craig Wolfe outside Boyle Street Community Services in Edmonton in November. Wolfe detailed some of his experiences with the Hope Mission.

Codie McLachlan / Star Edmonton

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Several people experiencing homelessness told Star Edmonton that the reason they don't stay at the Hope is because of the shelter's faith-based programming.

Wolfe described being woken up at around 6:30 a.m. by a staff member who would start “screaming scripture.”

“At the George Spady they wake us up with temperatures and who won the hockey game last night,” said Clarke Janvier. He’s originally from a First Nation near Cold Lake, but has lived on Edmonton’s streets for most of his life.

“At the Hope, they wake us up with scripture. That’s the main reason why I hate staying there ... I always try and leave before six o’clock so I don’t have to listen to that bullshit,” he said.

Matthew Deveau, who worked at the Hope Mission from 2013 to 2018, said he frequently heard from clients that it felt like staff were “Prioritizing delivering a faith message over providing basic services.”

What he said he found most harmful was how staff would say: “Well, the reason people here are experiencing homelessness, addiction and poverty is because they’re sinners and they’re not repenting sinners.”

Deveau questions if the Christian organization’s faith-based messaging gets in the way of their service delivery.

He said there’s also an “ideological bias” against the LGBTQ community that permeates the entire organization and told a story about one two-spirited woman who was forced to stay on the men’s side of the shelter because staff refused to recognize her gender expression.

“It was a fight nearly every night ... to get her into the women’s shelter.”

In late March, Jason Kenney, then the leader of the UCP, was a surprise guest speaker at the Herb Jamieson Centre, where he spoke of how he respects the work the organization does and committed to funding a new shelter if the UCP was elected. Earlier that month, he posted on Facebook about how he participated in the organization’s Cold Hands Warm Hearts event and why he supported the Hope Mission.

Some wonder if the UCP government is choosing to fund a Christian organization for ideological reasons.

“It quacks and talks like that kind of duck,” said McKeen, the city councillor. “And everybody I’ve talked to has sort of raised that suspicion.”

Cynthia Puddu, an assistant professor at MacEwan University who did her dissertation on the experiences of homeless youth in downtown Edmonton, was more pointed in her reading of why the government is funding a new homeless shelter, but slashing the budget for new affordable housing projects.

“It’s hard to say it doesn’t come from a place of ideology when the funding is going to these types of organizations, yet they’re putting a hold to safe injection sites and supervised consumption sites,” she said. “And when you look at the language being used by that government ... talking about (people) putting poison in their arms.”

Randy Legarde spent the last 10 years of his life on the street, addicted to alcohol.

Permanent supportive housing would provide people like him with the opportunity to break the cycle of addiction and start on a path of healing by providing peer programs, counselling for dealing with addiction and support with mental and physical health challenges. Advocates say those supports are critically important so people don’t continually find themselves back on the street.

It is, as McKeen calls it, a medical approach to a medical condition.

“Our homeless people, especially the ones sleeping rough, are really wounded and really ill and they need housing and health care,” McKeen said. “And for a lot of them, having a huge shelter doesn’t make sense.”

McKeen is curious to see how the new Herb Jamieson building will operate. He said he appreciates that faith-based organizations stepped up to do the work no one else was doing, but hopes to see them “move the dial 10 degrees.”

“It’s our hope that their staff is more trauma informed. I would love if there was an elder in residence as well as a pastor in residence,” he said.



Heather Legarde stands at the Herb Jamieson Centre, a homeless shelter in Edmonton where her late husband was found dead on Nov. 26, 2018. In her hands is an urn she made for his ashes.

Omar Mosleh/ Star Edmonton

Legarde would like to see more facilities like Ambrose Place, a permanent supportive housing complex with a focus on Indigenous programming. It's named after Ambrose Daniels, an Indigenous man who died of pneumonia on Edmonton's streets. The complex includes a program that treats people addicted to alcohol with hourly, measured doses of wine.

Legarde believes if Randy had housing with access to treatment and supports, he would still be alive.

"If you're fighting for a shelter mat every night, or if it's too scary and gross and your stuff gets stolen and you're trying to sleep in a bush, how are you supposed to work through not only the addiction, but the trauma that underlies most of these addictions?"


"They should have more places like Ambrose Place," she added, "and less gross mats on floor when people camp in the river valley anyway."

"Because that's not a path out. That's a death sentence."



Omar Mosleh is an Edmonton-based reporter for the Star. Follow him on Twitter: @OmarMosleh.

This is Exhibit "N" referred to in the Affidavit of
Devyn Ens, sworn this 15th day of September, 2023


CHRISTOPHER WIEBE
LAWYER

Edmonton · CBC Investigates

Frostbite amputations hit 10-year high in Edmonton last winter, new data show

'The vast, vast majority of these individuals were unhoused,' says emergency physician

[Taylor Lambert](#) · CBC News · Posted: Jan 11, 2023 2:00 AM MST | Last Updated: January 11



Laurie-Lynn Discoteau was already an amputee when she lost her other foot to frostbite in 2022. (Jamie McCannel/CBC)

Laurie-Lynn Discoteau went to the University of Alberta Hospital one evening in November 2022, seeking help for a painful and swollen infected foot.

The swelling meant her shoe and sock didn't fit on the foot, resulting in frostbite.

After surgery, Discoteau says she was discharged with only a light bandage.

When she couldn't recall the address of the place she'd been staying, she says the hospital staff put her in a cab to the Hope Mission shelter in central Edmonton, assuring her that the staff there had been notified and would bring her in immediately.

Upon arrival she recalls being told by shelter staff the facility was full and they'd had no call from the hospital.

"I had to wait for two hours outside in the cold. I think it was -40 with the wind chill that night," she said in a recent interview with CBC News.

Hope Mission says after speaking to staff and reviewing CCTV footage, they can't confirm Discoteau came to the shelter.

Regardless, Discoteau spent the night in a nearby encampment, in a damp tent with wet blankets. By morning the skin on her foot had blackened.

"I knew what that meant," she says.

In late December, her leg was amputated below the knee. It was her second amputation: she'd lost the other foot in an accident five years ago.

It's a common situation.

New data obtained by CBC News shows a major spike in the number of frostbite amputations performed in Edmonton last winter — more than the previous three years combined, and more than double any other year over the past decade.

Last winter was colder than average, but other even colder winters since 2011 saw little or no increase in amputations. What made last winter different was the sharp increase in the number

of people who were homeless during the pandemic, experts say.

That influx into a flawed and under-resourced system produced a situation that became dangerous when freezing temperatures arrived.

"It's a societal failure because we're not making sure that our most vulnerable are taken care of," says Scarlet Bjornson with the Bissell Centre, another of Edmonton's homeless shelters.

Tracking the data

CBC News [asked Alberta Health Services in November](#) how many amputations due to frostbite there were in Edmonton each year.

A senior AHS communications advisor responded they didn't have the information.

But a freedom of information request revealed that AHS does in fact track this data — and the numbers tell an alarming story.

The numbers are broken down by fiscal year, from April to March. This means each year of data includes one full winter season.

The fiscal year of 2021-2022 shows a dramatic spike in frostbite amputations in both Edmonton and Calgary, as registered by a code entered in AHS's system.

There were 91 codes in Edmonton that year, the most of any year since at least 2011, sometimes by a factor of three or four. Calgary saw 65 codes, up from 19 the previous year.

Last winter was colder than average in Edmonton, with 6.7 more days than normal below -20 C, and nearly eight more days than normal below -30 C. The climate normals are calculated by Environment Canada based on Edmonton data from 1981 to 2010.

But there have been similar and even colder winters over the past decade, including 2013-2014 and 2018-2019, none of which saw even a modest increase in frostbite amputations.

Indeed, the winter of 2020-2021 had fewer days of extreme cold but the second-most number of frostbite amputations over the past decade.

People without housing face countless dangers

Sandy Dong, an emergency physician who has practised in Alberta for two decades, says the data confirms what he and his colleagues witnessed last winter.

While the figures do not indicate which demographics are receiving frostbite amputations, Dong says that, in his experience, nearly all are people who are homeless.

"The vast, vast majority of these individuals were unhoused. I can think of one person out of those, I'm going to say, scores, that had a permanent address," says Dong.

"I think you can draw a straight line between our housing crisis and these outcomes."

The loss of body parts due to prolonged exposure to cold weather is one of the more visceral risks endured by people without stable access to safe housing, but it's far from the only one.

Violence, sexual assault and property theft are more common in homeless populations, and the risks are [particularly high](#) for youth and people identifying as LGBTQ2.

People experiencing homelessness are also disproportionately drawn from other vulnerable communities with their own elevated risk factors.

For example, while Indigenous people represent five per cent of the general population in Canada, nearly half of people who are homeless are Indigenous — and statistically more likely to [experience police violence](#) or intergenerational trauma from residential schools.

Several homeless people [have died in recent years](#) due to fires while trying to stay warm. Drug poisoning deaths from opioids have also [skyrocketed](#).

In 2022, Edmonton saw [an outbreak of shigella](#), a bacteria which causes dysentery and is typically found in areas where people lack access to basic sanitation.

Judith Gale, with the outreach group Bear Clan Patrol, agrees that the number of people she's encountered with amputations has noticeably increased.

Gale says she's often witnessed vulnerable people seeking warmth in the city's LRT stations being forced to leave.

"Our brothers and sisters are constantly getting shuffled around by peace officers and police," she said.

"In this cold weather, I would hope they would open their hearts a bit more and allow our brothers and sisters to stay within the confines of four walls and a roof, for goodness sake."

Police and peace officers are required to ensure people are offered transportation to shelters when they're kicked out of the LRT during cold weather, although there have been [multiple instances](#) where they've been accused of not doing so.

"These folks are the victims of a housing system that's not working," says Damian Collins, a professor and housing expert at the University of Alberta.

Official responses

City of Edmonton administration declined a request for an interview, instead offering to provide a statement in response to written questions.

"LRT stations are not appropriate shelter space as they lack basic amenities such as sufficient heat and washroom facilities," the statement said.

Police and peace officers will evict people trying to stay warm in LRT stations, and while they "cannot force people to go to shelter... during [extreme weather activations](#) the city provides a number of options to anyone on ETS properties needing access to services, including direct transport to shelters with capacity."

While noting that "some Edmontonians can't or won't access available shelter space," the statement pointed to the city's minimum standards for emergency shelters, which were adopted by council in 2021 to encourage shelter operators to address issues like safety, trauma, and lack of space for couples or pets.

However, the city provides no enforcement nor incentives for operators to implement the standards.

The statement did not answer the question of whether the city was aware of the sharp increase in frostbite amputations, only noting that "health statistics are provincial responsibilities."

AHS did not answer a question about why CBC News had previously been told that frostbite amputations statistics were not tracked.

In a statement, AHS said the increase in frostbite amputations was "due to a number of factors, likely including higher numbers of unhoused homeless during a harsh winter.

"Increased numbers of overdoses attributable to the fentanyl crisis during the past three to four years have also contributed to higher numbers of individuals suffering frostbite.

"While not all homeless are unhoused during the cold winter months, many struggle with multiple issues including mental health, addictions, and general health problems. Barriers to accessing community and health supports, especially during the pandemic, were also compounding factors that may have contributed to higher incidents of frostbite-related amputations."

AHS said the shigella outbreak in Edmonton was ongoing but that case numbers were trending downward. There have been 197 cases to date, of which 132 required hospitalization.

Housing-first is the most proven approach, say experts

Homelessness is a complex issue with myriad causes and intersections, touching on addiction, mental health, racism and intergenerational trauma. But experts and advocates say the solution is simple: unhoused people need housing.

"Housing-first works," said Collins. "There's really strong evidence of that."

The concept of housing-first originated in New York City in the early 1990s.

Rather than require homeless people to deal with their addictions or mental health prior to receiving housing support, the housing-first approach provides people with safe, reliable, affordable housing, giving them the secure environment needed to more effectively and durably address the other challenges in their lives.

It's an approach that's been proven highly effective.

Finland is the [only European Union country where homelessness is falling](#), and steadily so — results credited to its housing-first policy.

The approach has been implemented in Alberta, including Edmonton and Calgary.

Medicine Hat famously used housing-first to largely [eradicate chronic homelessness](#), only to [see the problem return](#) during the pandemic.

Edmonton saw the number of people experiencing homelessness decrease steadily for years by as much as 40 per cent before the pandemic.

Advocates say the evidence is clear: not only does the approach work in the long term, it also lowers the many risks people without housing face, such as amputations due to frostbite.

"Housing really could fix that immediately," says Bjornson from the Bissell Centre.

"If people had housing, they could have the harm to their person reduced.



An encampment in the heart of Edmonton as seen on November 15, 2022. (Kory Siegers/CBC)

The problem in Alberta, says Collins, is two-fold: insufficient government funding for housing given the rapid increase in need and the general unaffordability of market housing, which affects all Albertans but particularly those on low-income support.

"We did adopt housing-first and we did fund programs," says Collins.

"But we didn't do the other side of the coin, which is build the social and affordable units that are necessary to address the more systematic problems in the housing market."

"The alternative, I guess," he continued, "is a system that relies on shelters and policing, and that's what we are seeing a lot of in Edmonton right now."

That's a view echoed by others.

"I'm really concerned how the narrative around homelessness is really at this point woven in a conversation around public safety, and it's not around decency and human dignity and

providing people with the things that they desperately need," said Elliott Tanti, a senior manager with Boyle Street Community Services.

- [Alberta government pledges to tackle addiction, crime in Edmonton with new task force](#)

The provincial government [announced](#) in October a plan to spend \$187 million to address homelessness, mental health and addictions. Some of that money will go toward shelters and policing. In December, the province [surprised](#) the municipal government with a task force charged with finding and implementing solutions to those issues.

Public Safety Minister Mike Ellis — the task force chair and a former cop — said at the announcement that the police are "not to be cast aside and pushed away... they're the ones that need to help people."

Tanti, Bjornson, Gale and Collins all raised the point that, while a housing-first approach would require public spending, the current approach — including the cost of policing, amputations and other preventable health issues — is already significant.

People pay the price

"I knew how to be very independent with that one leg," says Discoteau, "but now having both of them gone, it's another 360 in my life."

Once a champion swimmer and University of Alberta student, she's now receiving AISH and trying to find an affordable place to move into with her husband while grappling with phantom limb pain.

"It's not something I'd wish on my worst enemy."

- [Alberta to spend combined \\$187M for homelessness, addictions in Edmonton, Calgary](#)

An opioid addiction began in the hospital when she was given opioids for her first amputation.

Her second amputation, she says, occurred in part because a doctor dismissed her as merely a drug user seeking a warm bed.

AHS wouldn't comment on an individual case but said it "consults with multiple groups including social work and specialty services to prepare discharge plans that are suitable for the individual."

Discoteau says that kind of discrimination is not unique to her as an Indigenous woman, nor to the health-care system

- [Edmonton advocates urge province to track deaths in homeless community](#)

It's pervasive in a society more concerned with pushing homeless people out of the way rather than addressing their needs, she says.

"I know people who would rather die than go to a hospital, because of the treatment they'd received at a hospital," she says.

Compassion is what's most needed, says Collins, from street level interactions up to the policymakers.

"We need to view the problem through that lens: that this is the symbol of a failing housing system, people sleeping in LRT stations, for example, and we need to have some sympathy rather than outrage, perhaps."

WATCH | Frostbite amputations a symptom of failure to house vulnerable, say experts:



Frostbite amputations in Edmonton see 10-year high

7 months ago | 2:02

CBC News has learned that Edmonton doctors conducted 94 amputations due to frostbite last year, the highest number in a decade. Though last winter wasn't especially cold, there were far more people living on the streets.

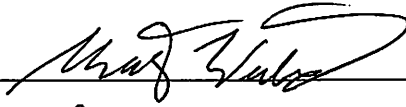
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Devyn Ens, sworn this 15th day of September, 2023



CHRISTOPHER WIESE
LAWYER



A National Protocol for Homeless Encampments in Canada

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UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A National Protocol for Homeless Encampments in Canada: A Human Rights Approach

Homeless encampments threaten many human rights, including most directly the right to housing. People living in encampments face profound challenges with respect to their health, security, and wellbeing, and encampment conditions typically fall far below international human rights standards. Residents are frequently subject to criminalization, harassment, violence, and discriminatory treatment. Encampments are thus instances of both human rights *violations* of those who are forced to rely on them for their homes, as well as human rights *claims*, advanced in response to violations of the right to housing.

Ultimately, encampments are a reflection of Canadian governments' failure to successfully implement the right to adequate housing.

As encampments increasingly emerge across Canada, there is an urgent need for governments to interact with them in a manner that upholds human rights. This Protocol, developed by the UN Special Rapporteur on the Right to Housing and her lead researcher, Kaitlin Schwan, with the input of many experts, outlines eight Principles to guide governments and other stakeholders in adopting a rights-based response to encampments. While encampments are not a solution to homelessness, it is critical that governments uphold the basic human rights and dignity of encampment residents while they wait for adequate, affordable housing solutions that meet their needs. The Principles outlined in this Protocol are based in international human rights law, and the recognition that encampment residents are rights holders and experts in their own lives. The Protocol is intended to assist governments in realizing the right to adequate housing for this group.

PRINCIPLES

Principle 1: Recognize residents of homeless encampments as rights holders

All government action with respect to homeless encampments must be guided by a commitment to upholding the human rights and human dignity of their residents. This means a shift away from criminalizing, penalizing, or obstructing homeless encampments, to an approach rooted in rights-based participation and accountability.

Principle 2: Meaningful engagement and effective participation of homeless encampment residents

Residents are entitled to meaningful participation in the design and implementation of policies, programs, and practices that affect them. Ensuring meaningful participation is central to respecting residents' autonomy, dignity, agency, and self-determination. Engagement should begin early, be ongoing, and proceed under the principle that residents are experts in their own lives. The views expressed by residents of homeless encampments

must be afforded adequate and due consideration in all decision-making processes. The right to participate requires that all residents be provided with information, resources, and opportunities to directly influence decisions that affect them.

Principle 3: Prohibit forced evictions of homeless encampments

International human rights law does not permit governments to destroy peoples' homes, even if those homes are made of improvised materials and established without legal authority. Governments may not remove residents from encampments without meaningfully engaging with them and identifying alternative places to live that are acceptable to them. Any such removal from their homes or from the land which they occupy, without the provision of appropriate forms of legal protection, is defined as a 'forced eviction' and is considered a gross violation of human rights. The removal of residents' private property without their knowledge and consent is also strictly prohibited.

Common reasons used to justify evictions of encampments, such as 'public interest,' 'city beautification', development or re-development, or at the behest of private actors (e.g., real estate firms), do not justify forced evictions.¹

Principle 4: Explore all viable alternatives to eviction

Governments must explore all viable alternatives to eviction, ensuring the meaningful and effective participation of residents in discussions regarding the future of the encampment. Meaningful consultation should seek to maximize participation and should be supported by access to free and independent legal advice. Where personal needs differ amongst residents of encampments such that a singular best alternative is not unanimous, governments will have to develop several solutions each of which is consistent with the principles outlined in this Protocol.

Principle 5: Ensure that relocation is human rights compliant

Considerations regarding relocation must be grounded in the principle that "the right to remain in one's home and community is central to the right to housing."² Meaningful, robust, and ongoing engagement with residents is required for any decisions regarding relocation. Governments must adhere to the right to housing and other human rights standards when relocation is necessary or preferred by residents. In such cases, adequate alternative housing, with all necessary amenities, must be provided to all residents prior to any eviction. Relocation must not result in the continuation or exacerbation of homelessness, or require the fracturing of families or partnerships.

Principle 6: Ensure encampments meet basic needs of residents consistent with human rights

Canadian governments must ensure, at a minimum, that basic adequacy standards are ensured in homeless encampments while adequate housing options are negotiated and

¹ A/HRC/43/43, para 36.

² A/73/310/Rev.1, para 26.

secured. Governments' compliance with international human rights law requires: (1) access to safe and clean drinking water, (2) access to hygiene and sanitation facilities, (3) resources and support to ensure fire safety, (4) waste management systems, (4) social supports and services, and guarantee of personal safety of residents, (5) facilities and resources that support food safety, (6) resources to support harm reduction, and (7) rodent and pest prevention.

Principle 7: Ensure human rights-based goals and outcomes, and the preservation of dignity for homeless encampment residents

Governments have an obligation to bring about positive human rights outcomes in all of their activities and decisions concerning homeless encampments. This means that Canadian governments must move, on a priority basis, towards the full enjoyment of the right to housing for encampment residents. Any decision that does not lead to the furthering of inhabitants' human rights, that does not ensure their dignity, or that represents a backwards step in terms of their enjoyment of human rights, is contrary to human rights law.

Principle 8: Respect, protect, and fulfill the distinct rights of Indigenous Peoples in all engagements with homeless encampments

Governments' engagement with Indigenous Peoples in homeless encampments must be guided by the obligation to respect, protect, and fulfil their distinct rights. This begins with recognition of the distinct relationship that Indigenous Peoples have to their lands and territories, and their right to construct shelter in ways that are culturally, historically, and spiritually significant. Governments must meaningfully consult with Indigenous encampment residents concerning any decisions that affects them, recognizing their right to self-determination and self-governance. International human rights law strictly forbids the forced eviction, displacement, and relocation of Indigenous Peoples in the absence of free, prior, and informed consent.

Given the disproportionate violence faced by Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse peoples, governments have an urgent obligation to protect these groups against all forms of violence and discrimination within homeless encampments, in a manner that is consistent with Indigenous self-determination and self-governance.

A National Protocol for Homeless Encampments in Canada: A Human Rights Approach

I. Introduction

1 In the face of escalating homelessness and housing affordability crises, many cities across Canada have seen a rise in homeless encampments. In various Canadian communities, people experiencing homelessness have turned to living in s, vehicles, or other forms of rudimentary or informal shelter as a means to survive.³ While they vary in size and structure, the term *'encampment'* is used to refer to any area wherein an individual or a group of people live in homelessness together, often in tents or other temporary structures (also referred to as *homeless camps, tent cities, homeless settlements or informal settlements*).

2 Homeless encampments in Canada must be understood in relation to the global housing crisis and the deepening of housing unaffordability across the country. Encampments must also be understood in the context of historical and ongoing structural racism and colonization in Canada, whereby Indigenous peoples have been systemically discriminated against and dispossessed of their lands, properties, and legal systems. Other groups have also endured systemic and historical disadvantage that has created barriers to accessing housing and shelters, including 2SLGBTQ+, Black and other racialized communities, people living with disabilities, and people who are criminalized. While encampments are often framed and discussed as matters of individual poverty or deficiency, they are the result of structural conditions and the failure of governments to implement the right to housing or to engage with reconciliation and decolonization materially and in good faith.

3 Homeless encampments threaten many human rights, including most specifically the right to housing. In international human rights law, homelessness - which includes those residing in encampments - is a prima facie violation of the right to adequate housing.⁴ This means that governments have a positive obligation to implement an urgent housing-focused response, ensuring that residents have access to adequate housing in the shortest possible time and, in the interim, that their human rights are fully respected.

4 Government responses to homeless encampments often fail to employ a rights-based approach. Residents of encampments are frequently the victims of abuse, harassment, violence, and forced evictions or 'sweeps.' In many cases, the issues

³ Encampments have arisen in cities across the country, including: Abbotsford, Vancouver, Victoria, Edmonton, Toronto, Ottawa, Gatineau, Peterborough, Winnipeg, Montreal, Nanaimo, Calgary, Saskatoon, Fredericton, Moncton, Oshawa, Halifax, and Maple Ridge.

⁴ A/HRC/31/54, para. 4.

associated with encampments are within the jurisdiction and responsibility of municipal authorities, including through bylaws specific to policing, fire and safety, sanitation, and social services. This has led to a pattern whereby municipal governments deploy bylaws, local police, and zoning policies that displace people in encampments, in turn compromising the physical and psychological health of people who have no place else to go and who rely on encampments to survive, absent accessible alternatives.⁵

5 Provincial, territorial, and federal governments have historically left engagement with encampments to city officials, who receive little (if any) guidance and support. Municipal authorities are often unaware of their legal obligations under international human rights law, including with respect to the duty to ensure the dignity and security of encampment residents.⁶ Further, accountability mechanisms with respect to the right to housing remain weak in Canada, meaning that people living in encampments have limited avenues through which to claim this right.

6 Ensuring a human rights-based response to homeless encampments should be a key concern for every Canadian city, and all governments should employ a human rights-based framework to guide their engagement with encampment residents.

II. Purpose of the National Protocol on Homeless Encampments

7 The purpose of this document is to provide all levels of government with an understanding of their human rights obligations with respect to homeless encampments, highlighting what is and is not permissible under international human rights law. This Protocol outlines 8 broad human rights-based Principles that must guide state⁷ action in response to homeless encampments of all kinds.

8 This Protocol does not attempt to foresee every possible context or challenge that may arise within encampments. Governments and relevant stakeholders must apply human rights principles as described in the Protocol to each case as it arises, endeavouring at all times to recognize and respect the inherent rights, dignity, and inclusion of encampment residents.

9 This Protocol has been developed by the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to housing in consultation with a range of experts from across Canada, including those

⁵ *Abbotsford (City) v. Shantz* (2016 BCSC 2437). Online, <https://www.canlii.org/en/bc/bcsc/doc/2016/2016bcsc2437/2016bcsc2437.html?resultIndex=1>

⁶ A/HRC/43/43, para 7.

⁷ 'State' refers to all levels and branches of government and anyone exercising government authority.

with lived expertise of homelessness, urban Indigenous leaders, community advocates, researchers, lawyers, and experts in human rights law.⁸

III. Encampments in Canada in the context of the Human Right to Adequate Housing

10 Under international human rights law, everyone has the right to adequate housing as an element of the right to an adequate standard of living.⁹ This requires States to ensure that housing is accessible, affordable, habitable, in a suitable location, culturally adequate, offers security of tenure, and is proximate to essential services such as health care and education.¹⁰ The right to adequate housing includes the right to be protected from: arbitrary or unlawful interference with an individual's privacy, family, and home; any forced eviction (regardless of legal title or tenure status); and from discrimination of any kind.¹¹

11 Homelessness constitutes a prima facie violation of the right to housing. It is a profound assault on a person's dignity, security, and social inclusion. Homelessness violates not only the right to housing, but often, depending on circumstances, violates a number of other human rights, including: non-discrimination; health; water and sanitation; freedom from cruel, degrading, and inhuman treatment; and the rights to life, liberty, and security of the person.¹²

12 Encampments constitute a form of homelessness, and thus are a reflection of the violation of residents' right to adequate housing. People living in encampments typically face a range of human rights violations and profound challenges with respect to their health, security, and wellbeing. Encampment conditions typically fall far below international human rights standards on a variety of fronts, often lacking even the most

⁸ This Protocol was prepared by: Leilani Farha and Kaitlin Schwan with the assistance of Bruce Porter, Vanessa Poirier, and Sam Freeman. Reviewers include, among others: Margaret Pfoh (Aboriginal Housing Management Association), Cathy Crowe (Shelter and Housing Justice Network), Greg Cook (Sanctuary Toronto), Tim Richter (Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness), Anna Cooper (Pivot Legal Society), Caitlin Shane (Pivot Legal Society), Emily Paradis (University of Toronto), Emma Stromberg (Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres), and Erin Dej (Wilfred Laurier University).

⁹ United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Committee's General Comments No. 4 (1991) on the right to adequate housing and No. 7 (1997) on forced evictions.

¹⁰ United Nations Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights Committee's General Comment No. 4 (1991) on the right to adequate housing. At the domestic level, adequate housing and core housing need is defined in relation to three housing standards: adequacy, affordability, and suitability. The Canadian Mortgage and Housing Corporation [defines](#) these housing standards in the following ways: "(1) [Adequate](#) housing are reported by their residents as not requiring any major repairs; (2) [Affordable](#) dwellings cost less than 30% of total before-tax household income; and (3) [Suitable](#) housing has enough bedrooms for the size and make-up of resident households, according to National Occupancy Standard (NOS) requirements."

¹¹ A/HRC/43/43.

¹² A/HRC/31/54; A/HRC/40/61, para 43.

basic services like toilets.¹³ Residents of encampments are also frequently subject to criminalization, harassment, violence, and discriminatory treatment.¹⁴

13 In the face of poverty and deep marginalization, people without homes face many untenable choices. For example, they may be forced to choose between ‘sleeping rough’ on their own (putting themselves at risk of violence and criminalization), entering an emergency homeless shelter (which may be inaccessible or inappropriate for their needs, or in which their autonomy, dignity, self-reliance, and/or independence may be undermined), or residing in a homeless encampment (in which they may lack access to basic services and face threats to their health). These choices are further narrowed for those living in communities that lack any emergency shelters, or where existing shelters are at (or over) capacity.

14 For people without access to adequate housing, the availability, accessibility, appropriateness, and adequacy of shelters plays a significant role in determining whether or not a person chooses to reside in a homeless encampment. In some cities, emergency shelters operate at 95-100% capacity,¹⁵ necessitating that some individuals sleep rough or reside in an encampment. Existing shelters may also not be low-barrier, wheelchair accessible, trans-inclusive, or safe for people experiencing complex trauma or other challenges. Homeless persons with mental health challenges, drug or alcohol dependencies, or pets may find themselves barred from shelters. Under such conditions, some individuals may prefer, or feel they have little choice but to, reside in an encampment. Encampments thus may become a necessity or the best option available for some of those the most marginalized people in Canadian society.

15 For Indigenous peoples, a desire to avoid state surveillance and a mistrust of institutional settings, including shelters, may be a factor in turning to or living in an encampment. Negative or harmful interactions with colonial institutions, such as residential schools, the child welfare system, corrections, hospitals, asylums or sanatoriums, and shelters, may be intergenerational in nature and highly traumatic. For these reasons and others, Indigenous peoples are overrepresented in homeless populations across Canada, and further to this, are more likely to be part of “outdoor” or “unsheltered” populations – including homeless encampments.¹⁶

¹³ See Cooper, A. (2020). *Why People Without Housing Still Need Heat*. Pivot Legal Society. Available from: http://www.pivotlegal.org/why_people_without_housing_still_need_heat

¹⁴ A/HRC/43/43, para 31; see also *Homelessness, Victimization and Crime: Knowledge and Actionable Recommendations*. Available from: <https://www.publicsafety.gc.ca/lbrr/archives/cnmcs-plcng/cn35305-eng.pdf>

¹⁵ Employment and Social Development Canada. (2018). *Shelter Capacity Report 2018*. Ottawa. Available from <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/homelessness/publications-bulletins/shelter-capacity-2018.html>

¹⁶ See Ontario Federation of Indigenous Friendship Centres. (2020). *Indigenous Homelessness in the 20 Largest Cities in Canada*. Submission to the Standing Committee on Human Resources, Skills and Social Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities, Canada.

16 Regardless of the reasons why a person resides in a homeless encampment, homeless encampments *do not* constitute adequate housing, and do not discharge governments of their positive obligation to ensure the realization of the right to adequate housing for all people. Under international human rights law, “States have an obligation to take steps to the maximum of their available resources with a view to achieving progressively the full realization of the right to adequate housing, by all appropriate means, including particularly the adoption of legislative measures.”¹⁷ As part of these obligations, States must prioritize marginalized individuals or groups living in precarious housing conditions - including residents of homeless encampments.¹⁸

17 Governments have an urgent, positive obligation to provide or otherwise ensure access to adequate housing - for residents of encampments as they do for all people experiencing homelessness. Governments must act to immediately pursue deliberate, concrete, and targeted efforts to end homelessness by ensuring access to adequate housing. In the interim, governments must ensure the availability of sufficient shelter spaces - accessible and appropriate for diverse needs - where dignity, autonomy, and self-determination are upheld.

18 The fact that encampments violate the right to housing does not in any way absolve governments of their obligations to uphold the basic human rights and dignity of encampment residents while they wait for adequate, affordable housing solutions that meet their needs. The Principles outlined in this Protocol seek to support governments and other stakeholders to ensure that their engagements with encampments are rights-based and recognize residents as rights holders, with a view to realizing the right to adequate housing for these groups while respecting their dignity, autonomy, individual circumstances, and personal choices.

19 International human rights law does not permit government to use force to destroy peoples’ homes, even if they are made of canvas or improvised from available materials and constructed without legal authority or title. States may not remove residents from encampments without meaningfully engaging them to identify alternative places to live that are acceptable to them. Any such removal from their homes or from the land which they occupy, without the provision of, and access to, appropriate forms of legal or other protection, consistent with international human rights law is defined as a ‘forced eviction’ and is considered a gross violation of human rights.

20 Unfortunately, such forced evictions or sweeps have become common in Canada. Evictions have contravened international law by being carried out without meaningful consultation with communities and without measures to ensure that those affected have access to alternative housing. They have been justified on the basis that the

¹⁷ International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, art. 2 (1).

¹⁸ A/HRC/43/4.

residents are there illegally, are at risk to themselves, are on land that is slated for development, or are obstructing the enjoyment of the community by others. Declining conditions at encampments and public health and safety concerns are also frequently the grounds on which local governments and provinces seek injunctions for removal. The impact of municipalities' failure to proactively provide resources and services to mitigate or improve those conditions and concerns is most often ignored. Some communities have engaged bylaw officers or local police to tear down encampments at first sight.¹⁹

21 None of these reasons, however, justify forced evictions under international law. Forced evictions often have harmful or disastrous consequences for encampment residents.²⁰ Victims may face life-threatening situations that compromise their health and security, or result in the loss of access to food, social supports, social and medical services, and other resources.²¹

22 Few governments have recognized encampments as a response to violations of fundamental human rights and a response to the isolation and indignity of homelessness. They have failed to treat those living in such encampments as legally entitled to the protection of their homes and their dignity.

IV. Relevant Authority

23 Canadian governments' responsibilities and relevant authority to ensure the right to adequate housing, including for people residing in encampments, is found in: (1) international human rights treaties, (2) the *National Right to Housing Act*, (3) the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* and human rights legislation, and (4) the UN *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (The Sustainable Development Goals)*.

1. International Human Rights Treaties

24 Canada has ratified multiple international human rights treaties that articulate the right to adequate housing. In 1976, Canada ratified the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*, which contains the chief articulation of the right to housing under Article 11.1 "the right of everyone to an adequate standard of living for [themselves] and [their] family, including adequate food, clothing and housing, and to

¹⁹ Ball, V. (2019). *Encampment residents fear eviction*. The Expositor. Available from: <https://www.brantfordexpositor.ca/news/local-news/encampment-residents-fear-eviction>

²⁰ A/HRC/43/43, para 36.

²¹ UN Office of the High Commissioner. (2014). *Forced Evictions: Fact Sheet No. 25/Rev.1*. Available from: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FS25.Rev.1.pdf>; Collinson, R. & Reed, D. (2018). *The Effects of Eviction on Low-Income Households*. Available from: https://www.law.nyu.edu/sites/default/files/upload_documents/evictions_collinson_reed.pdf

the continuous improvement of living conditions.”²² The right to housing and the prohibition against forced evictions has been interpreted in General Comments No. 4 and 7²³ by the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights. In addition, Canada has ratified other treaties that codify the right to adequate housing, including:

- *Convention on the Rights of Persons with Disabilities*
- *Convention on the Rights of the Child*
- *Convention on the Elimination of Racial Discrimination*
- *Convention on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women*

25 Human rights ratified by Canada “extend to all parts of federal States without any limitations or exceptions,” thus federal, provincial/territorial, and municipal governments are equally bound by these obligations.²⁴ In interpreting the right to adequate housing, the Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has emphasized that “the right to housing should not be interpreted in a narrow or restrictive sense which equates it with, for example, the shelter provided by merely having a roof over one’s head or views shelter exclusively as a commodity. Rather it should be seen as the right to live somewhere in security, peace and dignity.”²⁵

26 Canada has also formally recognized the *UN Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples*, which also codifies the right to adequate housing and affirms that Indigenous Peoples have the right to be actively involved in developing and determining housing programmes and policies that affect them.²⁶ Further, Indigenous Peoples’ right to land and self-determination is indivisible from the right to housing under international human rights law, meaning that they “shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories and that no relocation shall take place without their free, prior and informed consent.”²⁷ All encampments are located on the traditional territories of Indigenous nations, including in cities, towns, and rural areas. On these territories, Indigenous Peoples’ right to land and self-determination is in effect, whether or not those lands are subject to land claims or treaty.

1. Canadian Housing Policy and Legislation

27 The right to housing has also recently been recognized in Canadian legislation. In June 2019, the *National Housing Strategy Act* (the *Act*) received royal assent in Canada. The *Act* affirms Canada’s recognition of the right to housing as a fundamental human

²² ICESCR, Article 11, masculine pronouns corrected.

²³ General Comment 4 (1991), UN Doc. E/1992/23; General Comment 7 (1997), UN Doc. E/1998/22.

²⁴ A/69/274.

²⁵ General Comment 4 (1991), para 7.

²⁶ A/74/183.

²⁷ A/74/183.

right and commits to further its progressive realization as defined under the *International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights*.

28 The Preamble and Section 4 of the *Act* underscore the interdependence of the right to housing with other fundamental rights, such as the right to life and an adequate standard of health and socio-economic wellbeing. Specifically, Section 4 states:

It is declared to be the housing policy of the Government of Canada to:

- (a) recognize that the right to adequate housing is a fundamental human right affirmed in international law;
- (b) recognize that housing is essential to the inherent dignity and well-being of the person and to building sustainable and inclusive communities;
- (c) support improved housing outcomes for the people of Canada; and
- (d) further the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing as recognized in the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights.

2. The Canadian Charter and Provincial/Territorial Human Rights Legislation

29 The government of Canada's international human rights obligations must be considered by courts in Canada when determining the rights of residents of encampments under domestic law,²⁸ particularly the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*.²⁹ The Supreme Court has recognized that the right to "life, liberty and security of the person" in section 7 of the *Charter* may be interpreted to include the right to housing under international law.³⁰ Canada has told the UN that it accepts that section 7 at least ensures access to basic necessities of life and personal security.³¹

²⁸ It should be noted that a human rights-based approach under domestic law should entail mindfulness about core human rights and equality principles, such as substantive equality and non-discrimination, which recognizes that state interventions be particularly attuned to the specific needs of particular groups, including those impacted by systemic and historical disadvantage. In this regard, a 'one size fits all' approach may not fully capture the distinct needs of groups residing within encampments.

²⁹ *R. v. Hape*, [2007] 2 S.C.R. 292, 2007 SCC 26, para 56: "In interpreting the scope of application of the Charter, the courts should seek to ensure compliance with Canada's binding obligations under international law where the express words are capable of supporting such a construction."

³⁰ *Irwin Toy Ltd. v. Quebec (Attorney General)*, [1989] 1 S.C.R. 927; See Martha Jackman and Bruce Porter, "[Social and Economic Rights](#)", in Peter Oliver, Patrick Maklem & Nathalie DesRosiers, eds, *The Oxford Handbook of the Canadian Constitution* (New York: Oxford University Press, 2017), 843-861.

³¹ Canada's commitments are described in *Victoria (City) v. Adams*, 2008 BCSC 1363 (CanLII), paras 98-99. Online, <http://canlii.ca/t/215hs>

30 In Canada, courts have considered the human rights implications of encampments, and have emphasized that Section 7 life and security of the person interests are engaged where state action poses significant harm to the health and wellbeing of persons enduring homelessness and housing insecurity. For example, Canadian courts have recognized that the daily displacement of people experiencing homelessness causes physical and psychological harm. The Court accepted in the case of *Abbotsford (City) v. Shantz*, that "the result of repeated displacement often leads to the migration of homeless individuals towards more remote, isolated locations as a means to avoid detection. This not only makes supporting people more challenging, but also results in adverse health and safety risks." The court recognized that these health and safety risks include "impaired sleep and serious psychological pain and stress."³²

31 In the case of *Victoria v. Adams*,³³ residents of an encampment challenged a bylaw that prevented them from constructing temporary shelter in a park, on the basis of which city officials had secured an injunction to evict them. The British Columbia Supreme Court agreed that while the *Charter* does not explicitly recognize the right to housing, international law is a persuasive source for *Charter* interpretation and found that the bylaw violated the residents' right to security of the person. The BC Court of Appeal upheld the decision of the BC Supreme Court and other decisions in British Columbia have followed.³⁴ In *British Columbia v. Adamson* 2016,³⁵ for example, the court found that in the absence of alternative shelter or housing for all people experiencing homelessness, encampment residents must not be evicted from their encampment. In *Abbotsford v. Shantz* 2015³⁶ the Court found that denying encampment residents space to erect temporary shelters on public property was "grossly disproportionate to any benefit that the City might derive from furthering its objectives and breaches the s. 7 *Charter* rights of the City's homeless."³⁷

32 The right to equality is also protected under the Canadian Charter as well as under federal, provincial, and territorial human rights legislation. Not all levels of government interpret or administer human rights codes in the same manner, with each province and territory administering its own human rights codes.³⁸ Regardless of jurisdiction, the UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has stated that the right to

³² *Abbotsford (City) v. Shantz*, 2015 BCSC 1909, paras 213 and 219.

³³ *Victoria (City) v. Adams*, 2008 BCSC 1363 (CanLII), paras 85-100. Online, <http://canlii.ca/t/215hs>

³⁴ Key examples of case law includes: *Victoria v. Adams* 2008/ 2009, *Abbotsford v. Shantz* 2015, *BC v. Adamson* 2016, and *Vancouver (City) v. Wallstam* 2017.

³⁵ *British Columbia v. Adamson* (2016 BCSC 1245). Online, <https://www.canlii.org/en/bc/bcsc/doc/2016/2016bcsc1245/2016bcsc1245.html?resultIndex=1>

³⁶ *Abbotsford (City) v. Shantz* (2016 BCSC 2437). Online, <https://www.canlii.org/en/bc/bcsc/doc/2016/2016bcsc2437/2016bcsc2437.html?resultIndex=1>

³⁷ *Abbotsford (City) v. Shantz* (2016 BCSC 2437), para 224. Online, <https://www.canlii.org/en/bc/bcsc/doc/2016/2016bcsc2437/2016bcsc2437.html?resultIndex=1>

³⁸ For an overview of provincial and territorial human rights codes, see: <https://ccdi.ca/media/1414/20171102-publications-overview-of-hr-codes-by-province-final-en.pdf>

equality should be interpreted to provide the widest possible protection of the right to housing and has urged Canadian courts and governments to adopt such interpretations.³⁹

33 While it is clear that the *Charter* provides some protection from forced evictions and sweeps of encampment residents, the extent to which it requires governments to address the crisis of homelessness that has led to reliance on encampments remains unresolved. The Supreme Court of Canada has yet to agree to hear an appeal in a case that would clarify the obligations of governments to address homelessness as a human rights violation. The Supreme Court has, however, been clear that the *Charter* should, where possible, be interpreted to provide protection of rights that are guaranteed under international human rights law ratified by Canada.

34 Governments should not use uncertainty about what courts might rule as an excuse for violating the human rights of those who are homeless. Canadian governments have an obligation, under international human rights law, to promote and adopt interpretations of domestic law consistent with the right to adequate housing. The UN Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights has expressed concern that governments in Canada continue to argue in court against interpretations of the *Canadian Charter* that would protect the rights of homeless persons and residents of homeless encampments.

35 Therefore, it is critically important that, as part of a Protocol based on respect for human rights, municipal, provincial/territorial, and federal governments instruct their lawyers not to undermine international human rights or oppose reasonable interpretations of the *Charter* based on international human rights. They should never seek to undermine the equal rights of residents of homeless encampments to a dignified life, to liberty, and security of the person.

3. UN 2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development

36 In September 2015, member states of the United Nations, including Canada, adopted the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development (2030 Agenda)*. Target 11.1 of the SDGs specifically identifies that by 2030, all States must “ensure access for all to adequate, safe and affordable housing and basic services and to upgrade informal settlements.” This means governments must take steps to eliminate homelessness and make cities inclusive, safe, resilient and sustainable. Upgrading informal settlements

³⁹ CESCR, General Comment No. 9, para 15; E/C.12/1993/5, paras 4, 5, and 30.

includes the upgrading of homeless encampments.⁴⁰ States have affirmed that a rights-based approach to the SDG's is critical if they are to be achieved.⁴¹

V. Key Principles

37 It is critical that all levels of government in Canada employ an integrated human rights-based approach when engaging with encampments. The Principles outlined here aim to support the right to housing for all encampment residents as part of Canada's commitment to the right to housing under international human rights treaties and domestic law.

PRINCIPLE 1: Recognize residents of homeless encampments as rights holders

38 All government action with respect to homeless encampments must be guided by a commitment to upholding the human rights and human dignity of their residents. For many governments and those exercising governmental authority, this will mean a shift away from criminalizing, penalizing, or obstructing encampments, to an approach rooted in rights-based participation and accountability.⁴²

39 This will mean understanding encampments as instances of both human rights *violations* of those who are forced to rely on them for their homes, as well as human rights *claims* advanced in response to violations of the right to housing. While encampments arise as a result of governments failing to effectively implement the right to housing, they can also be an expression of individuals and communities claiming their legitimate place within cities, finding homes within communities of people without housing, asserting claims to lands and territories, and refusing to be made invisible. They are a form of grassroots human rights practice critical to a democracy such as Canada's.⁴³ For Indigenous peoples, the occupation of lands and traditional territories vis-à-vis encampments may also be an assertion of land rights, claimed in conjunction with the right to housing.

40 In recognition of encampments as rights violations and rights claims, governments must rectify the policy failures that underpin the emergence of homeless encampments, while simultaneously recognizing residents as rights holders who are advancing a legitimate human rights claim. Their efforts to claim their rights to home

⁴⁰ A/73/310/Rev.1.

⁴¹ The *National Housing Strategy* of Canada mirrors many of the commitments made in the *2030 Agenda*. However, the *Strategy* only commits Canada to reducing chronic homelessness by 50%, despite the *2030 Agenda's* imperative to eliminate homelessness and provide access to adequate housing for all.

⁴² A/73/310/Rev.1, para 15.

⁴³ A/73/310/Rev.1.

and community must be supported, not thwarted, criminalized, or dismissed as illegitimate or gratuitous protest.⁴⁴

PRINCIPLE 2: Meaningful engagement and effective participation of encampment residents

41 Ensuring encampment residents are able to participate in decisions that directly affect them is “critical to dignity, the exercise of agency, autonomy and self-determination.”⁴⁵ As rights holders, encampment residents are entitled to “participate actively, freely and meaningfully in the design and implementation of programmes and policies affecting them.”⁴⁶ Meaningful engagement must be grounded in recognition of the inherent dignity of encampment residents and their human rights, with the views expressed by residents of homeless encampments being afforded adequate and due consideration in all decision-making processes.

42 Governments and other actors must engage encampment residents in the early stages of discussion without using the threat of eviction procedures or police enforcement to coerce, intimidate, or harass.⁴⁷ Engagement should proceed under the principle that residents are experts in their own lives and what is required for a dignified life.⁴⁸ Indigenous residents of encampments should also be engaged in decision-making processes in a manner that is culturally-safe and trauma informed.

43 In the context of homeless encampments, the right to participate requires that all residents be provided with information, resources, and opportunities to directly influence decisions that affect them. All meetings with government officials or their representatives regarding the encampment should be documented and made available to encampment residents upon request.

44 Participation processes must comply with all human rights principles, including non-discrimination. Compliance with international human rights law requires:

- i. **Provision of necessary institutional, financial, and other resources to support residents’ right to participate**
In order to participate in decisions that affect them, encampment residents should be provided with financial and institutional resources (e.g., wifi/internet access, meeting spaces) that support their active participation in decision-making. Such supports should include, but are not

⁴⁴ A/73/310/Rev.1.

⁴⁵ A/HRC/43/43, para 20.

⁴⁶ Ibid. See also the Committee on the Rights of the Child’s General Comment No. 21 (2017) on children in street situations.

⁴⁷ A/HRC/40/61, para 38.

⁴⁸ A/HRC/43/43, para 21.

limited to: legal advice, social service supports, Indigenous cultural supports, literacy supports, translation, mobility supports, and transportation costs to attend consultations or meetings.⁴⁹ These resources should support democratic processes within the encampment, including community meetings, the appointment of community leaders, and the sharing of information.⁵⁰ Residents must be granted a reasonable and sufficient amount of time to consult on decisions that affect them.

- ii. **Provision of relevant information about the right to housing**
Encampment residents must be provided with information about their right to housing, including information about procedures through which they can hold governments and other actors accountable, as well as specific information about the rights of Indigenous Peoples.⁵¹
- iii. **Provision of relevant information concerning decisions that affect residents, ensuring sufficient time to consult**
Encampment residents must be provided with all relevant information in order to make decisions in matters that affect them.⁵²
- iv. **Establishment of community engagement agreement between homeless encampment residents, government actors, and other stakeholders**
In order to facilitate respectful, cooperative, and non-coercive communication between residents, government, and other stakeholders, government may seek to collaborate with residents to create a formal community engagement agreement (when appropriate and requested by residents).⁵³ This agreement should outline when and how encampment residents will be engaged,⁵⁴ and should be ongoing and responsive to the needs of the encampment residents.⁵⁵ It should allow the residents of homeless encampments to play an active role in all aspects of relevant proposals and policy, from commencement to conclusion. Residents should be able to challenge any decision made by government or other actors, to propose alternatives, and to articulate their own demands and priorities. Third party mediators should be available to protect against power imbalances that may lead to breakdown in negotiations or create

⁴⁹ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights' General Comment No. 4, para. 12, and the basic principles and guidelines on development-based evictions and displacement (A/HRC/4/18, annex I, para. 39).

⁵⁰ A/73/310/Rev.1.

⁵¹ A/73/310/Rev.1, para 19.

⁵² A/73/310/Rev.1.

⁵³ A/73/310/Rev.1.

⁵⁴ A/73/310/Rev.1.

⁵⁵ United Nations. *Guiding Principles on Extreme Poverty and Human Rights*, foundational principles, para 38.

unfair results.⁵⁶ Relevant government authorities and professionals should also be provided with “training in community engagement and accountability.”⁵⁷

v. **Provision of equitable opportunities for the meaningful participation of all encampment residents**

As a matter of human rights law, particular efforts must be taken to ensure equitable participation by women, persons with disabilities, Indigenous Peoples, migrants, and other groups who experience discrimination or marginalization.⁵⁸ Where possible, members of these groups should be afforded central roles in the process.⁵⁹

Principle 2 in Action – The “People’s Process” in Kabul, Afghanistan

The upgrading of informal settlements was identified as a key goal in the *2030 Agenda for Sustainable Development*, committing States to “upgrade slums” by 2030 (target 11.1). As identified by the UN Special Rapporteur on the right to adequate housing, “Participation in upgrading requires democratic processes through which the community can make collective decisions.” Under international human rights law, the democratic processes required to upgrade slums mirrors encampment residents’ right to participate in plans to resolve their housing needs. As such, democratic processes implemented to upgrade informal settlements in cities around the world can provide helpful examples for Canadian homeless encampments.

One such example is the “people’s process” in Kabul, Afghanistan. This process delineates community leadership and control over the upgrading process, and includes an organizational structure that enables the community to engage different levels of government. As part of this process, “local residents elect community development councils responsible for the selection, design, implementation and maintenance of the projects.” City staff are trained to work alongside informal settlement residents to implement and complete upgrading.

⁵⁶ A/HRC/43/4, para 42.

⁵⁷ A/73/310/Rev.1, para 20.

⁵⁸ A/HRC/43/4.

⁵⁹ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 21 (2009) on the right of everyone to take part in cultural life, in particular para 16.

PRINCIPLE 3: Prohibition of forced evictions of encampments

45 Under international human rights law, forced evictions constitute a gross violation of human rights and are prohibited in all circumstances, including in the context of encampments.⁶⁰

46 Forced evictions are defined as “the permanent or temporary removal against their will of individuals, families and/or communities from the homes and/or land which they occupy, without the provision of, and access to, appropriate forms of legal or other protection ... in conformity with the provisions of the International Covenants on Human Rights.”⁶¹

47 Forced evictions are impermissible irrespective of the tenure status of those affected. This means that the forced eviction of encampments is prohibited if appropriate forms of protection are not provided – including all of the requirements described in this Protocol.⁶² It may also be considered a forced eviction when governments’ and those acting on their behalf harass, intimidate, or threaten encampment residents, causing residents to vacate the property.⁶³

48 Common reasons used to justify evictions of encampments, such as ‘public interest,’ ‘city beautification,’ development or re-development, or at the behest of private actors (e.g., real estate firms), do not justify forced evictions.⁶⁴ Evictions (as opposed to “forced evictions”) may be justified in rare circumstances, but they may only be carried out after exploring all viable alternatives with residents, in accordance with law and consistent with the right to housing, as described in this Protocol.

49 Governments must repeal any laws or policies that sanction forced evictions and must refrain from adopting any such laws, including for example anti-camping laws, move-along laws, laws prohibiting tents being erected overnight, laws prohibiting personal belongings on the street, and other laws that penalize and punish people experiencing homelessness and residing in encampments.⁶⁵

⁶⁰ A/HRC/43/43, para 34; CESCR General Comment No.7.

⁶¹ CESCR General Comment No.7.

⁶² A/HRC/43/43, para 34; also see: “Security of tenure under domestic law should not, consequently, be restricted to those with formal title or contractual rights to their land or housing. The UN guiding principles on security of tenure (A/HRC/25/54, para. 5), states that security of tenure should be understood broadly as “a set of relationships with respect to housing and land, established through statutory or customary law or informal or hybrid arrangements, that enables one to live in one’s home in security, peace and dignity.”

⁶³ UN Office of the High Commissioner. (2014). *Forced Evictions: Fact Sheet No. 25/Rev.1*. Available from: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FS25.Rev.1.pdf>

⁶⁴ A/HRC/43/43, para 36.

⁶⁵ See, for example, Ontario’s *Safe Street’s Act* (1999).

Principle 3 in Action: Forced Eviction & Harassment of Homeless Encampment Residents

In cities around the world, people experiencing homelessness are frequently subject to discriminatory treatment, harassment, and extreme forms of violence because of their housing status. People residing in homeless encampments are exposed to similar or worse treatment, particularly when faced with pressure to relocate or disperse.

In some cases, local laws, policies, or practices can provide the mechanisms for this harassment. For example, in British Columbia local authorities enforced a bylaw prohibiting overnight shelters in parks by using tactics that included spreading chicken manure and fish fertilizer on a homeless encampment. Residents and allies of the homeless encampment subsequently filed a human rights complaint with regard to these practices (*Abbotsford (City) v. Shantz*), and the BC Supreme Court found that certain bylaws violated encampment residents' constitutional rights to life, liberty and security of the person.

Under international human rights law, such activities are strictly prohibited and constitute instances of forced eviction, even if they align with local laws or policies. Given this, it is critical that Canadian governments review local and national policies and laws to ensure they do not violate the prohibition against the forced eviction of homeless encampments.

PRINCIPLE 4: Explore all viable alternatives to eviction

50 Government authorities must explore all viable alternatives to eviction, in consultation with encampment residents.⁶⁶ This means ensuring their meaningful and effective participation in discussions regarding the future of the encampment.

51 Free and independent legal advice should be made available to all residents to help them understand the options, processes, and their rights. Consultations should be conducted at times and locations that are appropriate and accessible for residents to ensure their participation is maximised. Financial and other support should be available to residents so that they can fully participate in all discussions regarding the future of the encampment and so that residents can retain outside consultants (e.g., environmental engineers, architects) where needed to assist them in developing alternative options to eviction.

52 Discussions regarding viable alternatives to eviction must include meaningfully engagement with Indigenous Peoples and be grounded in principles of self-determination, free, prior and informed consent. In urban contexts, for example, urban Indigenous organisations should be engaged early in the planning process to establish service delivery roles and to ensure the availability of culturally appropriate services.

⁶⁶ A/HRC/43/4.

53 Where personal needs differ amongst residents of encampments such that a singular best alternative is not unanimous, governments will have to develop several solutions each of which is consistent with the principles outlined in this Protocol.

PRINCIPLE 5: Ensure that any relocation is human rights compliant

54 Homeless encampments are not a solution to homelessness, nor are they a form of adequate housing. Governments have an urgent, positive obligation to ensure encampment residents have access to long-term, adequate housing that meets their needs, accompanied by necessary supports. Rather than eviction, governments must engage with homeless encampments with a view to ensuring residents are able to access such housing.

55 Despite this obligation, many governments respond to encampments by simply moving residents from one bad site to another through the use of law enforcement, physical barriers, or other means, and without meaningfully engaging residents. This in no way addresses the underlying violations of the right to housing experienced by residents of encampments, is often costly, and can contribute to increased marginalization. If relocation is deemed necessary and/or desired by encampment residents, it is critical that it is conducted in a human rights compliant manner.

56 As a starting point, meaningful, robust, and ongoing engagement with residents (as defined in Principle 2) is required for the development of any relocation of homeless encampments or of their residents. Meaningful engagement with communities should ensure the development of plans that respect the rights of residents and can be implemented cooperatively, without police enforcement.⁶⁷ Considerations regarding relocation must be grounded in the principle that “the right to remain in one’s home and community is central to the right to housing.”⁶⁸ If relocation is consistent with the human rights of residents, it will almost always be achievable without the use of force.

57 If government authorities propose the relocation of residents of homeless encampments, and the residents desire to remain in situ, the burden of proof is on the government to demonstrate why in situ upgrading is unfeasible.⁶⁹

58 If, after meaningful engagement with those affected, relocation is deemed necessary and/or desired by encampment residents, adequate alternative housing must be provided in close proximity to the original place of residence and source of livelihood.⁷⁰ If governments have failed to provide residents with housing options that

⁶⁷ A/HRC/40/61, para 38.

⁶⁸ A/73/310/Rev.1, para 26.

⁶⁹ A/73/310/Rev.1, para 32.

⁷⁰ A/HRC/4/18, annex I, para. 60.

they find acceptable, residents must be permitted to remain or be provided with a satisfactory alternative location, while adequate permanent housing options are negotiated and put in place.

59 If, in the exceptional case there is no viable alternative to eviction by authorities, eviction must be compliant with all aspects of international human rights law.⁷¹ Compliance with international human rights law requires:

i. **Prohibition against the removal of residents' private property without their knowledge and consent**

The removal of residents' private property by governments and those acting on their behalf, including the police, without their knowledge and consent, is strictly prohibited.⁷² Such actions are contrary to the rights of residents and may contribute to the deepening of residents' marginalization, exclusion, and homelessness.⁷³ Governments and police must also seek to actively prevent the removal of homeless residents' private property by private actors or any other form of harassment.

ii. **Adherence to the right to housing and other human rights standards when relocation is necessary or preferred**

Adequate alternative housing, with all necessary amenities (particularly water, sanitation and electricity), must be in place for all residents prior to their eviction.⁷⁴ Alternative housing arrangements should be in close proximity to the original place of residence and to services, community support, and livelihood.⁷⁵ It is critical that all encampment residents be allowed to participate in decisions regarding relocation, including the timing and site of relocation.⁷⁶ A full hearing of the residents' concerns with the proposed relocation should be held, and alternatives explored.

⁷² A/HRC/4/18, *Basic Guidelines on Development Based Evictions*, see para 50: "States and their agents must take steps to ensure that no one is subject to direct or indiscriminate attacks or other acts of violence, especially against women and children, or arbitrarily deprived of property or possessions as a result of demolition, arson and other forms of deliberate destruction, negligence or any form of collective punishment. Property and possessions left behind involuntarily should be protected against destruction and arbitrary and illegal appropriation, occupation or use."

⁷³ National Law Centre on Homelessness & Poverty. (2017). *Violations of the Right to Privacy for Persons Experiencing Homelessness in the United States*. Available from: <https://nlchp.org/wp-content/uploads/2018/10/Special-Rapporteur-Right-to-Privacy.pdf>. See para 7: "For them, whatever shelter they are able to construct, whether legally or illegally, is their home, and their right to privacy should inhere to that home the same as it would for any regularly housed person. To deny them that right is to further marginalize and dehumanize this already highly marginalized and dehumanized population."

⁷⁴ A/73/310/Rev.1, para 34.

⁷⁵ Basic principles and guidelines on development-based evictions and displacement (A/HRC/4/18, annex I, para. 60) and A/HRC/4/18, annex I, para. 60.

⁷⁶ A/73/310/Rev.1, para 31.

iii. **Relocation must not result in the continuation or exacerbation of homelessness, or require the fracturing of families or partnerships**

Relocation must not result in the continuation or deepening of homelessness for residents.⁷⁷ Relocation must not require the separation of families or partners, as defined by rights-holders themselves, including chosen family and other kinship networks.⁷⁸ Governments should engage encampments with a view to keeping the community intact, if this is desired by the residents.⁷⁹ Governments should also ensure that relevant housing policies are supportive of the ways in which rights-holders define their own families, partnerships, communities and extended Indigenous kinship structures, and accommodate these whenever possible in public or social housing.

iv. **Access to justice to ensure procedural fairness and compliance with all human rights**

Access to justice must be ensured at all stages of government engagement with encampment residents, not just when eviction is imminent.⁸⁰ Access to justice and legal protection must meet international human rights law standards,⁸¹ including the provision of due process, access to legal aid, access to fair and impartial legal advice, and the ability to file complaints in a relevant forums (including Indigenous forums) that are geographically proximate.⁸²

⁷⁷ A/73/310/Rev.1.

⁷⁸ UN Office of the High Commissioner. (2014). *Forced Evictions: Fact Sheet No. 25/Rev.1*. Available from: <https://www.ohchr.org/Documents/Publications/FS25.Rev.1.pdf>. See para 52: “States should also ensure that members of the same extended family or community are not separated as a result of evictions.”; also, UNHR Summary Conclusions on the Family Unit, Available at <https://www.unhcr.org/protection/globalconsult/3c3d556b4/summary-conclusions-family-unity.html>, see para 8: “International human rights law has not explicitly defined ‘family’ although there is an emerging body of international jurisprudence on this issue which serves as a useful guide to interpretation. The question of the existence or non-existence of a family is essentially a question of fact, which must be determined on a case-by-case basis, requiring a flexible approach which takes account of cultural variations, and economic and emotional dependency factors. For the purposes of family reunification, ‘family’ includes, at the very minimum, members of the nuclear family (spouses and minor children).”

⁷⁹ A/HRC/43/43, para 42.

⁸⁰ A/HRC/43/43.

⁸¹ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights, General Comment No. 7, para 3.

⁸² It should be noted that broad and inclusive participatory-based processes can potentially foster access to justice for equity-seeking groups, and such processes should be responsive to the unique barriers to justice these groups face.

Principle 5 in Action - *Melani v. City of Johannesburg*

Globally, there are many compelling examples of courts upholding the rights of informal settlements or homeless encampments right to remain in place (“in situ”) in their community. One such example is *Melani v. City of Johannesburg* in South Africa. In this case, the Slovo Park informal settlement challenged the City of Johannesburg’s decision to relocate the community to an alternative location 11 km away. The court held that the Government’s upgrading policy, as required by the constitutional right to housing, envisages “a holistic development approach with minimum disruption or distortion of existing fragile community networks and support structures and encourages engagement between local authorities and residents living within informal settlements.” The Court concluded that relocation must be “the exception and not the rule” and any relocation must be to a location “as close as possible to the existing settlement.” The Court ordered the City of Johannesburg to reverse the decision to relocate the community, and mandated the city to apply for funding for in situ upgrading.

The South African approach is an example of how some national courts are making the shift to adopt a human rights-based approach to encampments. This is a shift that moves in the right direction and should be applied by all courts in Canada.

PRINCIPLE 6: Ensure encampments meet basic needs of residents consistent with human rights⁸³

60 Much of the stigma attached to residents of encampments is a result of governments failing to ensure access to basic services, including access to clean water, sanitation facilities, electricity, and heat, as well as support services.⁸⁴ These conditions violate a range of human rights, including rights to housing, health, physical integrity, privacy, and water and sanitation.⁸⁵ In these conditions, residents face profound threats to dignity, safety, security, health, and wellbeing.⁸⁶ The denial of access to water and sanitation by governments constitutes cruel and inhumane treatment, and is prohibited under international human rights law.⁸⁷

⁸³ Details regarding securing basic needs consistent with human rights can be found in Schedule B.

⁸⁴ A/73/310/Rev.1.

⁸⁵ A/HRC/43/4.

⁸⁶ UN Water. *Human Rights to Water and Sanitation*. Available from: <https://www.unwater.org/water-facts/human-rights/>

⁸⁷ A/73/310/Rev.1, para 46: “Attempting to discourage residents from remaining in informal settlements or encampments by denying access to water, sanitation and health services and other basic necessities, as has been witnessed by the Special Rapporteur in San Francisco and Oakland, California, United States of

61 Canadian governments must ensure, at a minimum, that rudimentary adequacy standards are ensured in homeless encampments on an urgent and priority basis, while adequate housing options are negotiated and secured. Government's compliance with international human rights law requires:

i. **Access to safe and clean drinking water**

Water and sanitation are critical to health for all people. Through *Resolution 64/292*, the United Nations explicitly recognized the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a "human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights."⁸⁸ The *Resolution* calls upon States and international organizations "to provide safe, clean, accessible and affordable drinking water and sanitation for all." This obligation extends to those residing in homeless encampments.⁸⁹

ii. **Access to hygiene and sanitation facilities**

Homeless encampments must be provided with sufficient resources and supports to ensure access to hygiene and sanitation facilities – toilets, showers, hand-washing stations, for example – within the encampment, or within very close proximity. Using existing facilities that remain open to the general public will not be appropriate. Facilities should ensure the hygiene and dignity of all residents irrespective of needs or identity. Peer-led hygiene and sanitation facilities have worked well in some contexts.

iii. **Resources and support to ensure fire safety**

General safety precautions should be implemented in an encampment environment to ensure residents are safe from fire and chemical exposure. Fire Departments should assist residents in developing a harm reduction approach to fire safety.

iv. **Waste management systems**

The lack of waste management systems in encampments has serious health and safety implications. Encampments necessarily create garbage during the course of daily activities. Garbage piles can become combustible fire hazards and can increase the risk of exposure to chemical waste. Human and animal biological waste also poses a particular danger. Without sanitary facilities, accumulated fecal waste can contaminate the

America, 29 constitutes cruel and inhuman treatment and is a violation of multiple human rights, including the rights to life, housing, health and water and sanitation."

⁸⁸A/RES/64/292, para 2. Available at: https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/64/292.

⁸⁹A/RES/64/292, para 3. Available at: https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/64/292.

ground and transmit diseases.⁹⁰ The improper disposal of needles can also transmit diseases through puncture wounds or re-use of needles. It is the responsibility of governments to ensure that homeless encampments have sufficient resources for the establishment of waste management systems.

v. **Social Supports and Services**

Residents of homeless encampments should be ensured access to health, mental health, addiction, and broader social services in a manner equitable to other community residents and consistent with human rights. All supports should be culturally appropriate and anti-oppressive. Governments should consult encampment residents on how best to provide access to these services, including through approaches such as outreach and/or on-site service provision. The provision of social services should not be linked to data gathering of any kind.

vi. **Guarantee Personal Safety of Residents**

Although research indicates that unsheltered people in Canada are disproportionately targets of violence, rather than perpetrators,⁹¹ interpersonal violence and exploitation can occur within encampments. Interpersonal violence is often exacerbated when people do not have their basic needs met,⁹² thus the provision of meaningful resources and supports will likely help ameliorate issues of safety.

It is the State's duty to protect the safety of all residents, particularly those who may be particularly vulnerable to abuse, harm, trafficking, or exploitation. Responses to violence must be guided by principles of transformative justice, rather than reproduce punitive outcomes and must be based in community-developed safety protocols. Governments must recognize that engaging police or other state authorities as a response to violence in encampments may put people at increased risk of harm, including due to risks of being criminalized or incarcerated.

vii. **Facilities and resources that support food safety**

Consuming contaminated food or water can cause a variety of foodborne

⁹⁰ CalRecycle. *Homeless Encampment Reference Guide*. Available at:

<https://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/illegaldump/homelesscamp#SolidWaste>

⁹¹ Sylvia, N., Hermer, J., Paradis, E., & Kellen, A. (2009). "More Sinned Against than Sinning? Homeless People as Victims of Crime and Harassment." In: Hulchanski, J. David; Campsie, Philippa; Chau, Shirley; Hwang, Stephen; Paradis, Emily (Eds.), *Finding Home: Policy Options for Addressing Homelessness in Canada* (e-book), Chapter 7.2. Toronto: Cities Centre, University of Toronto.

www.homelesshub.ca/FindingHome

⁹² Slabbert, I. (2017). Domestic violence and poverty: Some women's experiences. *Research on social work practice*, 27(2), 223-230.

illnesses. Encampments are often more susceptible to foodborne illnesses due to a lack of storage, cooling appliances, improperly cooked foods, and limited or no access to clean water. Diseases can spread quickly in an encampment setting.

One of the best ways to prevent the spread of illness is to for governments to provide resources that enable the encampment to implement food safety measurements such as refrigeration facilities, which are also important for storing medicines.

viii. **Resources to support harm reduction**

Governments must provide encampments with the resources to implement effective harm reduction measures. Appropriate professionals should support residents to establish emergency protocols for responding to overdoses and other health emergencies.

ix. **Rodent and pest prevention**

The presence of rodents and pests can pose a significant threat to the health of residents. Appropriate prevention and treatment options should be available for pest management that are safe for use in human environments. Encampment residents should be provided with the resources to prevent and address the presence of rodents and pests.

62 In implementing these standards, it must be recognized that residents of encampments are experts with respect to their living spaces — they often know what resources are needed and how best to mobilize them. As a matter of human rights, residents must be engaged in planning and carrying out any measures developed to improve access to basic services. Practices, systems, and agreements residents have already put in place should be respected by government officials and should inform any further improvements.

PRINCIPLE 7: Ensure human rights-based goals and outcomes, and the preservation of dignity for encampment residents

63 As a matter of international human rights law, the rights and dignity of residents must be at the heart of all government engagement with homeless encampments.⁹³ Dignity is an inherent human rights value that is reflected in the *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*. As such, Canadian governments have an obligation to bring about positive human rights outcomes in all of their activities and decisions concerning homeless encampments.

⁹³ ICESCR.

64 Where Canadian governments at any level make decisions with regards to encampments, it is essential that they do so taking into account the full spectrum of human rights of residents and ensure that their enjoyment of those rights is enhanced by all decisions. Any decision that does not lead to the furthering of human rights, fails to ensure their dignity, or represents a backwards step in terms of their enjoyment of human rights, is contrary to human rights law.

65 More broadly, the Canadian government has an obligation to the progressive realization of the right to housing, alongside all other human rights.⁹⁴ A central component of that obligation is to address on an urgent basis the needs of those in the greatest need. This means that Canadian governments must move, as a matter of priority, towards the full enjoyment of the right to housing for encampment residents.⁹⁵ When governments fail to bring about positive human rights outcomes for encampment residents, they fail their obligation to progressively realize the right to housing.⁹⁶

PRINCIPLE 8: Respect, protect, and fulfill the distinct rights of Indigenous Peoples in all engagements with encampments

66 Indigenous Peoples in Canada experience some of the most severe and egregious forms of housing need, and are dramatically overrepresented in homeless populations across the country, including specifically amongst those who are sleeping rough.⁹⁷ Under these conditions, many Indigenous Peoples experience profound violations of the right to housing and the right to self-determination, as well as violations of the right to freely pursue their economic, social, and cultural development.⁹⁸

67 For Indigenous Peoples in Canada, encampments and political occupation may occur simultaneously as a means of survival and a means of asserting rights to lands and

⁹⁴ ICESCR, in General Comment No.3 on the nature of states parties' obligations under Art 2(1) of the ICESCR.

⁹⁵ ICESCR, Article 2(1).

⁹⁶ Further, if governments failed to ensure human rights outcomes were obtained for encampment residents, and residents suffered some detriment to their enjoyment of their rights (e.g., loss of dignity or ended up street homeless without any shelter at all), this might be classed as retrogression and a breach of obligations.

⁹⁷ See ESDC (Employment and Social Development Canada). (2019). *Everyone counts highlights: Preliminary results from the second nationally coordinated point-in-time count of homelessness in Canadian communities*. Retrieved from <https://www.canada.ca/en/employment-social-development/programs/homelessness/reports/highlights-2018-point-in-time-count.html#3.5>. Similarly, the [2018 Toronto Street Needs Assessment](#) documented that 16% of those enumerated were Indigenous, and 38% of those sleeping rough were Indigenous. See also Patrick, C. (2014). *Aboriginal Homelessness in Canada: A Literature Review*. Toronto: Canadian Homelessness Research Network Press. Retrieved from <https://www.homelesshub.ca/sites/default/files/AboriginalLiteratureReview.pdf>.

⁹⁸ Article 3 of the *Declaration* and article 1 of the *Covenant*.

territories within cities and elsewhere. Whatever the impetus, any government engagement with Indigenous Peoples in encampments must be guided by the obligation to respect, protect, and fulfil their distinct rights. These rights are outlined in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, as well as many other international human rights treaties.

68 Under international human rights laws, the enjoyment of the right to housing for Indigenous Peoples is “deeply interconnected with their distinct relationship to their right to lands, territories and resources, their cultural integrity and their ability to determine and develop their own priorities and strategies for development.”⁹⁹ Recognition of the indivisible nature of Indigenous Peoples’ human rights, and the obligation to uphold these rights, must shape all government engagement with Indigenous encampment residents, as well as the Indigenous Peoples who own or occupy the land or territories upon which the encampment is located.

69 Compliance with international human rights law requires:

i. **Recognition of the distinct relationship that Indigenous Peoples have to their lands and territories**

In order to ensure adequate housing for Indigenous Peoples, States, Indigenous authorities, and other actors must recognize the distinct spiritual and cultural relationships that Indigenous Peoples have with their lands and territories.¹⁰⁰ This recognition includes protection for Indigenous residents of encampments, who have the right to utilize their lands and territories in line with their own economic, social, political, spiritual, cultural, and traditional practices (as defined and assessed by the Peoples themselves).¹⁰¹

Under international human rights law, governments “should respect those housing structures which an Indigenous community deems to be adequate in the light of their own culture and traditions.”¹⁰² In the context of encampments, governments must respect Indigenous Peoples’ right to construct shelter and housing in ways that incorporate their lived histories, cultures, and experiences.¹⁰³

ii. **Guarantee of self-determination, free, prior and informed consent and**

⁹⁹ A/74/183, particularly para 6: “The right to adequate housing can be enjoyed by Indigenous Peoples only if its articulation under article 11 (1) of the International Covenant on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights is understood as interdependent with and indivisible from the rights and legal principles set out in the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.”

¹⁰⁰ A/74/183.

¹⁰¹ A/74/183.

¹⁰² A/74/183, para 62.

¹⁰³ A/74/183.

meaningful consultation of Indigenous Peoples

Governments must ensure the participation of Indigenous Peoples in all decision-making processes that affect them.¹⁰⁴ Governments must consult with Indigenous encampment residents in order to obtain their free, prior, and informed consent before taking any action that may affect them.¹⁰⁵

Engagement with Indigenous communities should involve genuine dialogue and should be guided by “mutual respect, good faith and the sincere desire to reach agreement.”¹⁰⁶ This consultation process must engage representatives chosen by Indigenous Peoples themselves, in accordance with their own procedures and practices.¹⁰⁷ As outlined in Principle 2, governments must provide Indigenous residents with necessary institutional, financial, and other resources in order to support their right to participate.¹⁰⁸ Indigenous women and girls must be consulted on a priority basis.¹⁰⁹

iii. Prohibition against the forced eviction, displacement, and relocation of Indigenous Peoples

Indigenous Peoples’ access to and control over their lands, territories and resources constitute a fundamental element of the realization of their right to adequate housing.¹¹⁰ As such, international human rights law strictly prohibits the relocation of Indigenous Peoples in the absence of free, prior, and informed consent.¹¹¹

iv. Protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination for Indigenous women, girls, and gender diverse peoples

Indigenous women, girls, gender diverse, and Two-Spirit peoples experience particular forms of violence – including sexual violence and

¹⁰⁴ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples.

¹⁰⁵ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, in particular arts. 10, 19, and 23.

¹⁰⁶ A/74/183, para 56.

¹⁰⁷ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, art. 18. See also Indigenous and Tribal Peoples Convention, 1989 (No. 169), art. 6(1)(b); American Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, arts. XXI (2) and XXIII (1); and A/HRC/18/42, annex (Expert Mechanism advice No. 2 (2011)). See also Human Rights Committee, General Comment No. 23 (1994) on the rights of minorities, para 7.

¹⁰⁸ Committee on Economic, Social and Cultural Rights’ General Comment No. 4, para 12, and the basic principles and guidelines on development-based evictions and displacement (A/HRC/4/18, annex I, para 39).

¹⁰⁹ A/74/183, para 59.

¹¹⁰ A/74/183, para 51. See also A/HRC/7/16, paras 45–48; The United Nations Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Art. 26.2: “Indigenous Peoples have the right to own, use, develop, and control the lands, territories and resources that they possess by reason of traditional occupation or use, as well as those which they have otherwise acquired.”

¹¹¹ United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples, Art. 10: “Indigenous Peoples shall not be forcibly removed from their lands or territories. No relocation shall take place without the free, prior and informed consent of the Indigenous Peoples concerned and after agreement on just and fair compensation and, where possible, with the option of return.”

homicide – in relation to the intersection of their indigeneity, gender identity, socioeconomic and cultural status, and their housing status.¹¹² Canadian law recognizes the concept of multiple and intersecting forms of discrimination, and under international human rights law all Indigenous women, girls, and those who are gender diverse or Two-Spirited “must enjoy full protection and guarantees against all forms of violence and discrimination, whether inside or outside their communities.”¹¹³

It is incumbent upon governments to provide Indigenous women and girls protection and guarantee against all forms of violence and discrimination within encampments, including from state authorities, in a manner that is consistent with Indigenous self-determination and self-governance.

¹¹² A/74/183, para 59.

¹¹³ A/74/183, para. 59.

SCHEDULE A: Select Case Law on Homeless Encampments in Canada

Victoria (City) v. Adams, [2009 BCCA 563](#)¹¹⁴

The City of Victoria made an application for an injunction to remove a "tent city" at Cridge Park. The City relied on its *Streets and Traffic Bylaw* and *Parks Regulation Bylaw*, which prohibits loitering and taking up an overnight temporary residence in public places. On appeal, the Court of Appeal established that the Victoria City bylaws violated section 7 of the *Canadian Charter* "in that they deprive homeless people of life, liberty and security of the person in a manner not in accordance with the principles of fundamental justice," and the provisions were not saved by section 1 of the *Charter* (para. 42). The Court of Appeal confirmed that the bylaw was overbroad "because it is in effect at all times, in all public places in the City."¹¹⁵

Abbotsford (City) v. Shantz, 2015¹¹⁶

The City of Abbotsford applied for an interim injunction requiring the defendants to remove themselves and their encampment from a city park. The Court concluded that the bylaws were "grossly disproportionate" because:

"the effect of denying the City's homeless access to public spaces without permits and not permitting them to erect temporary shelters without permits is grossly disproportionate to any benefit that the City might derive from furthering its objectives and breaches the s. 7 *Charter* rights of the City's homeless."¹¹⁷

The Court concluded that allowing the City's homeless to set up their shelters overnight and taking them down during the day would "reasonably balance the needs of the homeless and the rights of other residents of the City."¹¹⁸

¹¹⁴ *Victoria(City) v. Adams* (2009, BCCA 563). Online,

<https://www.canlii.org/en/bc/bcca/doc/2009/2009bccca563/2009bccca563.html?resultIndex=1>

¹¹⁵ The Court of Appeal stated at para. 116 that: "The prohibition on shelter contained in the Bylaws is overbroad because it is in effect at all times, in all public places in the City. There are a number of less restrictive alternatives that would further the City's concerns regarding the preservation of urban parks. The City could require the overhead protection to be taken down every morning, as well as prohibit sleeping in sensitive park regions." This case is perhaps one of the most notable successes in homeless litigation in Canada.

¹¹⁶ *Abbotsford (City) v. Shantz* (2016 BCSC 2437). Online,

<https://www.canlii.org/en/bc/bcsc/doc/2016/2016bcsc2437/2016bcsc2437.html?resultIndex=1>

¹¹⁷ Para 224

¹¹⁸ The Court stated, "The evidence shows, however, that there is a legitimate need for people to shelter and rest during the day and no indoor shelter in which to do so. A minimally impairing response to balancing that need with the interests of other users of developed parks would be to allow overnight shelters to be erected in public spaces between 7:00 p.m. and 9:00 a.m. the following day." [para 276]

British Columbia v. Adamson, [2016 BCSC 584](#) [*Adamson #1*] and [2016 BCSC 1245](#) [*Adamson #2*]¹¹⁹

The Province of BC applied for an interlocutory injunction to restrain the defendant encampment residents from trespassing on the Victoria courthouse green space. On the first application, the court concluded that the balance of convenience did not favour the granting of the injunction, stating

“the balance of convenience is overwhelmingly in favour of the defendants, who simply have nowhere to move to, if the injunction were to issue, other than shelters that are incapable of meeting the needs of some of them, or will result in their constant disruption and a perpetuation of a relentless series of daily moves to the streets, doorways, and parks of the City of Victoria.”¹²⁰

Following this, a second injunction was filed based on new evidence of the encampment deterioration conditions, as well as supporting evidence that the Province would make housing available to encampment residents. The court made an order requiring the encampment to be cleared, but granting residents to stay until alternate housing options were made available to them.¹²¹

Vancouver (City) v. Wallstam, [2017 BCSC 937](#)¹²²

The City of Vancouver applied for an interlocutory injunction requiring encampment residents to vacate and remove all tents and other structures from a vacant city lot. The Court relied on the injunction test set out in *RJR-MacDonald*.¹²³ The court noted that:

“The test requires that the *applicant* prove it will suffer irreparable harm if the injunction is not granted...When I asked counsel what harm the *City* would suffer if the injunction was not granted, he answered that not granting the injunction would mean that a ‘vital social housing project won't go ahead’ and that interferes with the public good. He also points out the timeline for development of the project requires the injunction urgently ... While everyone can agree that more social housing is an important goal, I must balance that general concern against the position of the occupants that the tent city, as it currently exists, is now providing shelter and safe living space for the occupants.”¹²⁴

¹¹⁹ *British Columbia v. Adamson* (2016 BCSC 1245). Online, <https://www.canlii.org/en/bc/bcsc/doc/2016/2016bcsc1245/2016bcsc1245.html?resultIndex=1>

¹²⁰ Para 183.

¹²¹ Paras 85-86,

¹²² *Vancouver (City) v. Wallstam* 2017 BCSC 937 at para 60. Online, <https://www.canlii.org/en/bc/bcsc/doc/2017/2017bcsc937/2017bcsc937.html?resultIndex=1>

¹²³ In *RJR-MacDonald Inc. v. Canada (Attorney General)*, [1994] 1 S.C.R. 311

¹²⁴ Para 46-47.

The court concluded that the City failed to meet the *RJR-MacDonald* test and dismissed the City's application, but without prejudice to bring it forward again on a more complete factual record.¹²⁵

¹²⁵ Para 64.

SCHEDULE B: An Elaboration on Principle 6

Ensure encampments meet basic needs of residents consistent with human rights

Canadian governments must ensure, at a minimum, that rudimentary adequacy standards are ensured in homeless encampments on an urgent and priority basis, while adequate housing options are negotiated and secured. Government's compliance with international human rights law requires:

i. **Access to safe and clean drinking water**

Water and sanitation are critical to health for all people. Through *Resolution 64/292*, the United Nations explicitly recognized the right to safe and clean drinking water and sanitation as a "human right that is essential for the full enjoyment of life and all human rights."¹²⁶ The *Resolution* calls upon States and international organizations "to provide safe, clean, accessible and affordable drinking water and sanitation for all." This obligation extends to those residing in homeless encampments.¹²⁷

To ensure access to safe and clean drinking water, governments should provide homeless encampments with resources for:

- On site/close-proximity clean and safe drinking/potable water, ensuring a sufficient number of access points for water relative to the number of residents
- Dishwashing Station(s) with clean water, sufficient in number for the number of residents

ii. **Access to hygiene and sanitation facilities**

Homeless encampments must be provided with sufficient resources and supports to ensure access to hygiene and sanitation facilities – toilets, showers, hand-washing stations, for example – within the encampment, or within very close proximity. Using existing facilities that remain open to the general public will not be appropriate. Facilities should ensure the hygiene and dignity of all residents irrespective of needs or identity. Peer-led hygiene and sanitation facilities have worked well in some contexts.

Hygiene and sanitation facilities should include:

- Washing stations, including showers with privacy and safety for women and gender diverse peoples, stocked with soap, water, paper towels

¹²⁶A/RES/64/292, para 2. Available at:

https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/64/292.

¹²⁷A/RES/64/292, para 3. Available at:

https://www.un.org/ga/search/view_doc.asp?symbol=A/RES/64/292.

- Adequate numbers of toilets based on the encampment population which must be accessible for residents with disabilities. Every toilet station must also have a hand-washing station
- Access to cleaning and bathing supplies
- Access to free laundry facilities
- Free feminine hygiene products
- Access to clean bedding

iii. **Resources and support to ensure fire safety**

General safety precautions should be implemented in an encampment environment to ensure residents are safe from fire and chemical exposure. Fire Departments should assist residents in developing a harm reduction approach to fire safety. Residents should be provided with resources to support best safety practices, including:

- Fire-safety approved sources of heat (e.g., safe metal vessels for heat)
- Warming tents
- In-tent heat sources
- Fire-proof tents
- Fire evacuation plan
- Signage indicating evacuation plans
- Accessible information on fire safety tips and how to handle and store flammable materials (e.g., gasoline, butane, propane)
- Fire extinguishers appropriately spaced and training for residents on how to operate them
- Electricity/charging stations for phones and laptops
- On-site ashtrays or cigarette disposal posts

iv. **Waste management systems**

The lack of waste management systems in homeless encampments has serious health and safety implications. Encampments necessarily create garbage during the course of daily activities, including during food preparation or shelter building. Unwanted materials can pile up quickly when there is no waste system in place to remove garbage from the area. Garbage piles can become combustible fire hazards and can increase the risk of exposure to chemical waste.

Human and animal biological waste also poses a particular danger. Without sanitary facilities, accumulated fecal waste can contaminate the ground and transmit diseases.¹²⁸ The improper disposal of needles can also transmit diseases through puncture wounds or re-use of needles.

¹²⁸ CalRecycle. *Homeless Encampment Reference Guide*. Online at <https://www.calrecycle.ca.gov/illegaldump/homelesscamp#SolidWaste>

It is the responsibility of governments to ensure that homeless encampments have sufficient resources for the establishment of waste management systems, which should include:

- Weekly garbage and recycling (more frequent if needed)
- Regular service for waste water and portable toilets
- Independent waste bins for flammable/hazardous waste (e.g., fuel, motor oil, batteries, light bulbs)
- Large rodent-proof waste bins with tight fitting lids
- Garbage bags, cleaning supplies, hand soap, hand sanitizer
- Waste water holding tanks (if there are no sewers near encampment)

v. **Social Supports and Services**

Residents of homeless encampments should be ensured access to health, mental health, addiction, and broader social services in a manner equitable to other community residents and consistent with human rights. All supports should be culturally appropriate and anti-oppressive. Governments should consult encampment residents on how best to provide access to these services, including through approaches such as outreach and/or on-site service provision. The provision of social services should not be linked to data gathering of any kind.

i. **Guarantee Personal Safety of Residents**

Although research indicates that unsheltered people in Canada are disproportionately targets of violence, rather than perpetrators,¹²⁹ interpersonal violence and exploitation can occur within encampments. Interpersonal violence is often exacerbated when people do not have their basic needs met,¹³⁰ thus the provision of meaningful resources and supports will likely help ameliorate issues of safety.

It is the State's duty to protect the safety of all residents, particularly those who may be particularly vulnerable to abuse, harm, trafficking, or exploitation. Responses to violence must be guided by principles of transformative justice, rather than reproduce punitive outcomes and must be based in community-developed safety protocols. Governments must recognize that engaging police or other state authorities as a response to violence in encampments may put people at increased risk of harm, including due to risks of being criminalized or incarcerated.

¹²⁹ Sylvia, N., Hermer, J., Paradis, E., & Kellen, A. (2009). "More Sinned Against than Sinning? Homeless People as Victims of Crime and Harassment." In: Hulchanski, J. David; Campsie, Philippa; Chau, Shirley; Hwang, Stephen; Paradis, Emily (Eds.), *Finding Home: Policy Options for Addressing Homelessness in Canada* (e-book), Chapter 7.2. Toronto: Cities Centre, University of Toronto.

www.homelesshub.ca/FindingHome

¹³⁰ Slabbert, I. (2017). Domestic violence and poverty: Some women's experiences. *Research on social work practice*, 27(2), 223-230.

Any approach to addressing interpersonal safety within encampments must:

- Center on the most vulnerable members of the encampment, namely: BIPOC, women, trans-people and other LGBTQ2S+ persons, persons with disabilities, and other groups who experience discrimination or marginalization.
- Provide resources and supports to allow for Indigenous and other non-colonial approaches to conflict resolution.
- Provide safe, confidential, accessible, and non-coercive mechanisms through which individuals experiencing violence can report these experiences and receive trauma-informed supports and services, ensuring that these individuals are able to access alternative safe housing (as desired).

vi. **Facilities and resources that support food safety**

Consuming contaminated food or water can cause a variety of foodborne illnesses. Encampments are often more susceptible to foodborne illnesses due to a lack of storage, cooling appliances, improperly cooked foods, and limited or no access to clean water. Diseases can spread quickly in an encampment setting.

One of the best ways to prevent the spread of illness is to for governments to provide resources that enable the encampment to implement food safety measurements. This includes:

- Rodent-proof storage containers, with lids that can be sealed
- Shelving units to ensure food is stored off the ground
- Soap and sanitizer to clean food preparation surfaces
- Cooling appliance(s) to prevent spoilage
- Cooking appliance(s) to ensure food is thoroughly cooked

vii. **Resources to support harm reduction**

Governments must provide homeless encampments with the resources to implement effective harm reduction measures within homeless encampments. Appropriate professionals should support residents to establish emergency protocols for responding to overdoses and other health emergencies.

Encampment residents should be provided with:

- Overdose prevention training (e.g., CPR training)
- Overdose prevention supplies (e.g., Naloxone)
- Overdose Prevention Sites, where possible
- Puncture-proof containers for needle disposal
- Harm reduction outreach supports
- Regular servicing of puncture-proof containers by a certified waste-management company

- Information about available emergency services in the event of overdoses or other health-related crises

viii. **Rodent and pest prevention**

The presence of rodents and pests can pose a significant threat to the health of residents. Appropriate prevention and treatment options should be available for pest management that are safe for use in human environments (e.g., diatomaceous earth). Encampment residents should be provided with the resources to prevent and address the presence of rodents and pests, including:

- Resources and information on rodent and pest prevention
- A bait-station to detract rodents from sleeping tents, regularly serviced and monitored
- Cleaning materials and gloves to dispose of rodents

In implementing these standards, it must be recognized that residents of encampments are the experts of their living spaces — they often know what resources are needed and how best to mobilize them. As a matter of human rights, encampment residents must be engaged in planning and carrying out any measures developed to improve access to basic services for the encampment. Practices, systems, and agreements residents already have in place should be recognized by government officials and should inform any further improvements.



CITY OF HAMILTON
HEALTHY AND SAFE COMMUNITIES DEPARTMENT
Housing Services Division

REVISED

TO:	Mayor and Members General Issues Committee
COMMITTEE DATE:	August 14, 2023
SUBJECT/REPORT NO:	Public Feedback and Recommendations for an Encampment Protocol and Sanctioned Sites (HSC20036(g))
WARD(S) AFFECTED:	City Wide
PREPARED BY:	Mike Jones (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3824 Danielle Blake (905) 546-2424 Ext. 3731
SUBMITTED BY:	Michelle Baird Director, Housing Services Division Healthy and Safe Communities Department
SIGNATURE:	<i>Michelle Baird</i>
SUBMITTED BY:	Angie Burden General Manger Healthy and Safe Communities Department
SIGNATURE:	<i>A. Burden</i>

RECOMMENDATIONS

- (a) That Council adopt the Proposed Encampment Protocol attached as Appendix “A” to Report HSC20036(g), and that staff be directed to implement and enforce the Proposed Encampment Protocol;
- (b) That Public Works be authorized to provide security to ensure access to washroom and/or shower services to support individuals who are unsheltered, including two existing all-year outdoor washroom facilities with 24-hour security and two existing all-year recreation centres with 12-hour security;
 - (i) at a cost of \$576,240, for the period of September 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024 to be funded from the Tax Stabilization Reserve (#110046)
 - (ii) and that the cost of \$987,840 to operationalize this as a permanent program in 2024 be referred to the 2024 Tax Budget process;

SUBJECT: Public Feedback and recommendations for an Encampment Protocol and Sanctioned Sites (HSC20036(g)) (City Wide) Page 2 of 22 - REVISED

- (c) That in order for Planning and Economic Development, Municipal By-Law Enforcement to support enforcement of the Protocol based on the existing Monday to Friday level of service, and a four-day response time, Council approve;
 - (i) the creation of a 1FTE Supervisor of Municipal By-law Enforcement for the period September 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024, at a cost of \$86,120 to be funded from the Tax Stabilization Reserve (#110046),
 - (ii) and that the approval of one FTE at an annualized cost of \$147,650 be referred to the 2024 Tax Budget process.
 - (iii) that the purchase of a vehicle at a cost of \$35,000, and an annual operating impact of \$9,000 be referred to the 2024 Tax Budget process

- (d) That staff be directed to provide an enhanced service level to allow the Public Works, Parks Section staff to respond to requests for clean-up and maintenance in alignment with the service levels outlined in the Proposed Encampment Protocol and that Council approve;
 - (i) the creation of one FTE Parks Lead Hand and two FTE Parks Operators and that the cost of \$93,000 for this enhanced service level be funded from the Tax Stabilization Reserve (#110046) for the period of September 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024;
 - (ii) The leasing of vehicles and equipment for the period of September 1, 2023 to March 31, 2024 at an estimated cost of \$50,000, be funded from the Tax Stabilization Reserve (#110046);
 - (iii) the operating cost of \$278,400 to annualize this enhanced service level, includes \$245,000 for the approval of three FTEs, and \$33,400 for the annualized operating cost of the vehicles in recommendation d)iv) be referred to the 2024 Tax Budget process;
 - (iv) the Capital Costs of \$220,000 for equipment and vehicles to be referred to the 2024 Tax Budget process.

- e) That the General Manager of the Healthy and Safe Communities Department ,or designate, be authorized and directed, on behalf of the City of Hamilton, to enter into, execute and administer all agreements and documents necessary to hire the equivalent and two seconded peer Support Workers, at an approximate annual cost of \$61,500 each (total for two FTEs \$123,000) on terms and conditions satisfactory to the General Manager of the Healthy and Safe Communities Department, or designate, and in a form satisfactory to the City

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Solicitor and that the funding for these positions be referred to the 2024 Tax Operating Budget;

- (f) That upon the adoption of the Encampment Protocol, Housing Focused Street Outreach collaborate with key stakeholders to develop a liaison committee to ensure that individuals with lived/living experience of encampments, frontline operators, and staff are all meaningfully engaged in providing input into Hamilton's encampment response. Staff will collaborate with key stakeholders including Keeping Six, HAMSMaRT, Hamilton Regional Indian Centre, and Hamilton Encampment Support Network (to help recruit people with lived/living experience for the committee), to develop terms of reference for the committee that identifies goals, scope, and desired outcomes;
- (g) That the General Manager of Healthy and Safe Communities be authorized and directed to enter into the appropriate agreements with the Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters for the operation of a two-year pilot of up to 25 temporary tiny homes on City lands, with appropriate security, services and supports at no cost to the City, subject to the following conditions; and,
 - (i) That the pilot program be located on the site of the parking area on the Strachan Avenue linear park or an alternative site that meets the criteria for the Protocol and is determined appropriate by staff
 - (ii) That all potential residents of the site are selected from the City of Hamilton's By-Name List, as per associated requirements of its Coordinated Access system, with approval from Housing Services Division;
 - (iii) That staff be directed to work with Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters to review operating model and provision of security and services, determine performance metrics and outcomes, including eligibility and entry criteria, gender-specific considerations, Indigenous supports, identification of formalized community partnerships with health and social service sectors, pathways to permanent housing, and a process for evaluating the success of the pilot;
 - (iv) That staff be directed to evaluate program outcomes and that staff include information on the Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters in progress updates to the General Issues Committee as part of future encampment reporting and performance metrics reporting; and
 - (v) That a detailed exit strategy has been created and will be executed should HATS not be able to ensure site safety and/or adequate funding to operate.

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- (vi) That the appropriate General Managers of Public Works, Planning and Economic Development, and the Healthy and Safe Communities Department or their designate be directed and authorized, on behalf of the City of Hamilton, to enter into, execute and administer all agreements and documents necessary to implement the purchases and grants outlined above on terms and conditions satisfactory to the respective General Manager or their designate and in a form satisfactory to the City Solicitor.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

As Hamilton's housing crisis has increased, so have the numbers of individuals living unsheltered in encampments throughout the City. The issue of encampments is one faced by many municipalities and continues to be a challenge beyond Hamilton. Encampments exist because of complex challenges related to housing affordability and availability, substance use, incomes, and mental health. Housing is a human right. As a municipality we must find a way to respond to the needs of residents living unsheltered in our community while we also work towards permanent housing solutions.

In May 2023 given the significance of the issue for the community, Council directed staff to make the draft Encampment Protocol and issues related to Encampment Response available for public comment. Staff were directed to incorporate public feedback into an amended Protocol for Council's consideration, conduct a jurisdictional scan of sanctioned sites (including site criteria, potential sites and potential operating models), and identify resources required to integrate services and supports for individuals living unsheltered, including access to washrooms and showers, and integration of peer supports and Indigenous supports into the City's encampment response and report back to Council on these items,

Staff received significant feedback from the community on the draft Protocol and the City's response to encampments in June 2023, including 11,943 visitors to the Engage Hamilton website who contributed 15,965 individual comments as well as approximately 2,000 attendees at three in-person community engagement sessions.

Across all engagement forums, there was a strong consensus that respondents did not want tents in parks, and that parkland should continue to be available for public use, especially in wards where there is a lack of parks and greenspace. There was no clear consensus from the public related to adopting sanctioned sites as an approach to encampments. There was consensus that respondents wanted more permanent, housing-focused solutions to address the needs of individuals living unsheltered.

There was limited agreement regarding the Protocol, with some believing it was too lenient and others too restrictive. One area of consensus was that encampments should be further away from schools, day cares centres, playgrounds, pools, waterparks, or any spray pad, as well as from private property lines. To address the public feedback

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provided, the recommended Protocol has been amended to extend the permissible distances from identified areas of concern. With amendments to the Protocol based on feedback from respondents, staff are recommending the adoption of the encampment Protocol as per Appendix “A” of Report HCS20036(g).

As directed by Council, staff completed a jurisdictional scan reviewing sanctioned encampments across North America, as well as their potential operating models. Staff used this scan and advice from staff within Housing Services Division to develop a list of criteria for sanctioned sites and ran scenarios of what locations would meet criteria and might be feasible in a sanctioned site model with services and supports. These scenarios assumed the need for a minimum of six sites to accommodate 150 individuals currently unsheltered in Hamilton, and a capacity of no more than 25 individuals at each site.

Given the costs associated with developing a fully serviced and managed sanctioned encampment site model; no clear mandate from respondents to trial the approach in Hamilton; unclear outcomes regarding pathways into housing; and limited resources being available, staff are not recommending identifying managed sanctioned encampment sites and related resourcing at this time.

However, staff’s jurisdictional scan identified the need for a low-barrier alternative to encampments, and as a result staff are recommending implementation of a two-year pilot project led by the Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters (HATS), at no cost to the City, to operationalize a model that will accommodate up to 25 structures where individuals living in encampments can live on a temporary basis. Staff used similar criteria as was used for identifying potential locations for sanctioned sites, as well as HATS criteria that was developed in consultation with community partners and individuals with lived experience, and the recommended Encampment Protocol to identify suitable sites that would work for the model. Strachan Linear Park on Strachan Avenue between Hughson Street and James Street has been identified as a preferred site for HATS for occupancy beginning Q4 2023. Staff will work with HATS to identify measurable outcomes to review the success of the approach, and ensure all prospective residents are selected via the City’s By-Name List.

To meet Council direction related to providing access to washroom and showers for individuals living unsheltered, staff is recommending providing washroom and/or shower access via existing washrooms in parks, and at specified recreational centres in areas, both accompanied by security staff to ensure safety. Staff are recommending that two existing washrooms in two city parks be available and staffed 24 hours daily in addition to provision of shower and washroom facilities at two existing recreation facilities for 12 hours daily. Subject to Council approving resources, additional facilities can be added.

To meet Council direction to integrate peer support workers and Indigenous workers within the encampment response, an existing 1.0 FTE outreach worker was converted

to an Indigenous Outreach worker within existing budget and employed as part of Housing Outreach team through a partnership with the Hamilton Regional Indian Centre Staff are recommending an addition of two (2) FTE peer support workers to the Housing Outreach team, to provide expertise around harm reduction, and support the cleaning of encampment sites, with particular attention to needle debris and other paraphernalia. Peer support workers are individuals with lived experience, in this case experience with homelessness, substance use or mental health, and through their shared experiences are able to provide emotional and practical support to clients making a connection based on their experience. This is different than a Housing Focused Street Outreach worker whose role it is to engage with the individuals to understand their situation and needs in order to connect with services and support their journey to housing. The Outreach worker has specific training and expertise in working with the population and the homelessness serving sector.

There has been a growth in the number of encampments across the city. The increase in encampments often leads to more waste and garbage accumulation in and around these areas. In addition, the increased numbers of encampments means additional by-law officers are needed to address any issues that arise and ensuring compliance with the Protocol.

Council provided direction to staff to transition existing encampment response team resources to the new Protocol and encampment response. Staff have been able to convert one Housing Outreach worker funded in the initial response to an Indigenous Worker, in response to Council direction. The City's current encampment response, as approved by Council through Report HSC20038(e)/PED21188(b), which includes a seven day / week service level response from the City's Housing Outreach Team, will continue to be necessary and will be deployed to implement the recommended protocol. Additionally, new investments are recommended in this report to ensure the current Monday-Friday level of service with a four-day response time and increased resources for waste/garbage removal, as well as to address any new services and supports directed by the Council.

By investing in these additional resources, the goal is to manage the encampments more effectively, ensuring the safety and well-being of both the residents and the surrounding community. The recommended actions aim to strike a balance between providing support and services to those experiencing homelessness while also addressing the concerns of constituents and local authorities regarding the impact of encampments on the area. The goal is to achieve the current Monday-Friday level of service with a four-day response time to handle constituent complaints and effectively implement the recommended protocol.

Respondents in the public consultations were strongly in support of prioritizing garbage removal and management throughout the City, for the health and safety of individuals living in encampments and the broader public.

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SUBJECT: Public Feedback and recommendations for an Encampment Protocol and Sanctioned Sites (HSC20036(g)) (City Wide) Page 7 of 22 - REVISED

Overall, the report recommends the need for additional resources and a coordinated effort to manage encampments effectively and meet the community's needs and demands.

Finally, from a human-rights based approach, to properly address the needs of individuals living in encampments, and consistent with overwhelming feedback from respondents, staff are recommending the prioritization of permanent, affordable supportive housing and other supports to address the needs of individuals living unsheltered. Many of these permanent housing solutions are included in recommendations made in Report HSC23041 Addressing the Needs of Unsheltered Individuals and Emergency Shelter Capacity. This report aims to outline the current pressures in the shelter system and propose immediate and long-term solutions to address the pressures.

Alternatives for Consideration – Page 22

FINANCIAL – STAFFING – LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

Financial:

In order for the Coordinated Encampment response to implement additional service enhancements from September 1, 2023 through March 31, 2024, staff are requesting an additional \$805K of operating costs to be funded through the Tax Stabilization Reserve, (#110046). A permanent coordinated encampment response is being referred to the 2024 Tax Operating budget with a levy increase of \$1.6M or 0.15%, as well as an additional \$255K of Capital Costs which will be referred to the 2024 Tax Budget.

Please see Table 1 below:

SUBJECT: Public Feedback and recommendations for an Encampment Protocol and Sanctioned Sites (HSC20036(g)) (City Wide) Page 8 of 22 - REVISED

TABLE 1

Division/Section	2023 Council Approved Budget	August 2023 Additions – Recommended Resources	Total Costs
Housing Services Division	Manager of Housing Focused Street Outreach (\$149,000) Project Manager of Housing-focused Street Outreach (\$102,000) 3.5 FTE Street Outreach Workers (\$216,000) – Added in March to transition Housing Focused Outreach Team from 5 days to 7 days/week	1FTE Street Outreach worker converted to 1FTE Indigenous Worker (cost neutral) 2 FTE Peer support workers, to support harm reduction (\$123,000) (referred to 2024 budget process)	<u>Approved in 2023 Budget:</u> \$467,000 <u>Annual Operating Costs referred to 2024 Budget:</u> \$123,000
Licensing and Bylaw Services	Two Municipal Law Enforcement Officers (\$277,000)	Growth in encampments since February will require additional resources for enforcement of the Protocol at current levels, and a dedicated team with a supervisor: One Supervisor of Municipal Law Enforcement (\$147,650) One vehicle (\$35,000) Vehicle Operating Costs (\$9,000)	<u>Approved in 2023 Budget:</u> \$277,000 <u>Sept 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024 Operating Costs:</u> \$86,120 One-Time Capital referred to 2024 budget: \$35,000 <u>Annual Operating Referred to 2024 Budget:</u> \$156,650

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Public Works	<p>Parks Section Supervisor (\$124,000)</p> <p>Public Works operating budget be increased by \$200,000 annually</p>	<p>Public Works requires additional resources to ensure timely removal of debris and garbage given number of encampments and waste left behind when encampments are relocated</p> <p>One Parks Lead Hand (\$95,000) and two Parks Operators (\$150,000).</p> <p>Leasing of vehicles and equipment Sept. 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024 estimated at \$50,000</p> <p>One-time capital costs for Crew Cab Stake Truck (\$100,000), Skid Steer (\$100,000) and Dump Trailer (\$20,000), plus an additional annual operational cost of \$33,400 for gas, insurance, contribution to reserve and maintenance.</p> <p>Annual Increase in budget to hire security for ensuring individuals who are unsheltered have access to existing washrooms and recreational facilities (\$987,840)</p>	<p><u>Approved in 2023 Budget:</u> \$324,000</p> <p><u>Sept. 1 2023 – March 31 2024</u> <u>Operating Costs:</u> \$719,377</p> <p>One-Time Capital referred to 2024 Budget: \$220,000</p> <p><u>Annual Operating Referred to 2024 budget:</u> \$1,266,240</p>
Hamilton Police Services	Two Encampment Engagement Officers (\$268,646), plus \$30,000 in one-time costs for ancillary equipment	N/A	<u>Approved in 2023 Budget:</u> \$298,646

Summary costs by category in order to understand total costs of in-year, existing approved budget and proposed 2024 referred budget. Please refer to Table 2 below:

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TABLE 2

2023 Approved Budget	Operating Costs Referred to 2024 Budget	Total New Budget	Sept 1, 2023 – March 31, 2024	Capital Costs referred to 2024 Budget (one-time)
\$1,366,646	\$1,545,890	\$2,912,536	\$805,497	\$255,000

There is no financial impact based upon staff’s understanding of the Tiny Homes requirements as outline in this Council report.

Legal: N/A
Staffing:

The recommended coordinated encampment response enhancement would require an additional 6.00 FTEs, including 2.00 seconded staff and 4.00 budgeted complement staff:

- Funding for 2.00 additional seconded FTE, Peer Support Workers
- 1.00 FTE Supervisor of Municipal Law Enforcement
- 1.00 FTE Parks Lead Hand
- 2.00 FTE Parks Operators

HISTORICAL BACKGROUND

On May 17, 2023, staff provided a Proposed Encampment Protocol (HSC20038(f)/PED21188(c)) to Council. Staff recommended that Council adopt a Proposed Encampment Protocol in the interim, while a period of public comment occurred. Once the period of public comment closed, it was recommended that the City make the necessary changes and provide a final recommended Protocol to Council in August 2023.

Council did not adopt the proposed Encampment Protocol and directed staff to make the Protocol available for public comment until June 30, 2023, and to obtain public comment around the concept of sanctioned sites, conduct a jurisdictional scan on potential operating models, and report back to Council in August 2023. Council also directed staff to incorporate access to services and supports, including washrooms and showers, Peer Supports and Indigenous Workers, into encampment response.

POLICY IMPLICATIONS AND LEGISLATED REQUIREMENTS

Not applicable

RELEVANT CONSULTATION

Staff from Healthy and Safe Communities (Housing Services Division, Recreation Division), Planning and Economic Development (Licensing and By-law Services), Public Works (Parks Division), and Corporate Services (Legal, and Finance) were consulted in the preparation of this report. Hamilton Police Services were also consulted.

Housing Focused Street Outreach engaged with the City's Indigenous Relations Office to review its approach to addressing Indigenous involvement in an outreach response model.

Additionally, Housing Focused Street Outreach met with the Program Coordinator at Keeping Six to review the proposed Encampment Protocol to ensure the language contained in the protocol reflected the voice of people with lived/living experience, and Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters to understand program model and approach to operationalization.

ANALYSIS AND RATIONALE FOR RECOMMENDATION

Housing is a human right. While the City continues to work toward permanent solutions such as affordable and/or supportive housing, we continue to have individuals experiencing homelessness. Encampments have proliferated within communities across Canada since the beginning of the pandemic, creating challenges as well as new avenues for solutions to chronic homelessness. Various approaches to managing encampments have been identified and established in municipalities across Canada. Notably, a human-rights based approach to managing encampments has set a baseline for interactions between municipalities and individuals residing in encampments, as per principles outlined in a National Protocol for Homeless Encampments in Canada. The City is committed to pursuing deeply affordable supportive housing opportunities, while also pursuing an interim strategy based on a human-rights approach to manage encampments across the city.

From June 7 to June 30, 2023, City staff gathered input from the public through Engage Hamilton, conducted outreach to Ward Councillors offices, and ran three public meetings across the City, facilitated by Lura Consulting.

Additional comments from the public were submitted through other channels such as emailed comments, comments from town halls, and paper survey submissions. In total, the City received 11,943 visitors to the Engage Hamilton website, contributing 15,965 individual comments to the City of Hamilton regarding encampment response in the city. The questionnaire on Engage Hamilton resulted in 7,536 contributions. Approximately 2,000 Hamilton residents attended public meetings.

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Protocol Feedback

Overall, there was diversity of response and limited agreement about the draft Protocol. The draft Protocol received 41% approval via the Engage Hamilton questionnaire, which was consistent with the feedback received within the three public forums and other comments and feedback provided. There was no clear consensus regarding the Protocol, as one significant cohort identified the protocol as too enforcement-laden, while another believed it was too permissive, and some preferred an enforcement-led approach, whereas others preferred a housing-led approach.

Several changes were recommended to the Protocol by respondents, including updates to the distances away from specific landmarks or facilities, and more clarity regarding roles and responsibilities of staff, processes, and service levels.

Respondents were clear that they did not want encampments in city parks as they wanted parks to be able to be used and enjoyed for park purposes by individuals and families. At the same time, respondents also recognized the need to identify a place where individuals who are unsheltered could set up temporary shelter, and provided suggestions such as vacant lots, greenspace, underutilized campgrounds, and industrial or commercial lands, as places to host encampments.

There was a strong consensus that the City should identify temporary indoor spaces as an alternative to planned outdoor encampments, suggesting that the City explore using existing vacant or underutilized spaces such as vacant city buildings, vacant schools, and/or vacant underutilized private buildings (i.e. office space, industrial buildings, faith-based buildings). Respondents also identified alternative housing options as alternatives to sanctioned encampments, such as tiny homes, increased shelter beds, and field hospital beds.

A majority of respondents identified encampments as a symptom of several interconnected issues rather than a root cause, and provided several ideas regarding investments or re-allocation of funding toward longer-term solutions, such as mental health and substance use supports (i.e., programs, beds), the creation of new affordable housing to meet the demands of the community, rent and cost of living controls that help ensure affordability of housing and other goods, and a basic income to ensure that everyone is afforded the dignity and opportunity to live a healthy life. They also urged the City to advocate to other levels of government for more resources and develop a strategy to better provide mental health and substance use supports (i.e., treatment programs, rehabilitation, counselling), housing solutions (i.e., supportive housing, affordable housing, licensed rooming houses), and better income support services.

Sanctioned Sites Feedback

The feedback received from respondents regarding sanctioned encampment sites highlights a mix of support and concerns. While 54% of respondents to the Engage Hamilton questionnaire were in favor of such sites, the support was less clear in the public forums, and significant concerns were raised, particularly about the locations of these sites.

One area of common consensus across various feedback modalities was that sanctioned sites should be situated away from parks and residential neighborhoods where children commonly gather. Concerns were raised about the potential impact on homeowners and nearby residents, including safety concerns, property values, residential taxes, and overall affordability.

Despite concerns, those who supported sanctioned encampment sites identified important benefits. One major advantage was the ease of providing services and support to the unsheltered population within these sites. These services included mental health and substance use supports, medical services, counseling services, and access to essential needs like potable water, washroom and shower facilities, garbage removal, and safekeeping of personal belongings.

To address the concerns raised and effectively implement sanctioned encampment sites, careful consideration of the locations is essential. Ensuring that these sites are not located near residential areas and places where children frequently gather can help alleviate the worries of nearby residents. Additionally, engaging in community dialogue and providing clear communication about the planned sites' services and benefits can build support and understanding among all stakeholders.

Overall, the feedback underscores the importance of finding a balanced approach to address homelessness, considering both the needs of the unsheltered population and the concerns of residents. By focusing on providing comprehensive services and support to those in need while respecting the concerns of the broader community, there is potential to find solutions that benefit everyone and foster a sense of compassion and empathy in addressing the issue of homelessness in Hamilton.

General Feedback

Based on the public engagement, it is evident that there was a strong consensus to support individuals living in encampments. The goal was to achieve better outcomes by providing access to the services they need, with a particular emphasis on housing, within a safe and healthy environment. This approach aims to address the immediate needs of the unhoused population while also taking into consideration the safety and access to recreation for the broader community.

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Safety emerged as a significant concern across various feedback modalities. Respondents expressed a desire for actions and supports to ensure the safety of both individuals who are unsheltered and the community as a whole. Addressing safety concerns includes measures to protect those living in encampments, creating a sense of security for housed residents, and ensuring visitors to the City of Hamilton feel safe.

To gather and present the feedback accurately, a detailed methodology was utilized during the engagement process. This methodology allowed for comprehensive data collection and analysis, ensuring that the 'what we heard' section in the report encompassed the themes identified through feedback from all engagement sessions and modalities. The inclusion of Appendix “C” provides further transparency and clarity in presenting the findings and conclusions drawn from the public engagement.

Encampment Protocol Update

Following the feedback received through the consultations, staff are recommending a number of modifications to the Encampment Protocol that was originally presented to Council in May 2023 through Report HSC20038(f)/PED21188(c). These amendments seek to reflect some of the commonly raised issues that locations suitable for unsheltered individuals should not be mixed with locations for other uses (e.g. schools, recreational assets, private property).

The Protocol attached as Appendix “A” to this report remains largely the same as the version proposed in May 2023, but the following changes are being recommended to some of the separation distances between encampments and other uses to reflect public feedback:

- Schools and day-care centres (50 metres has been modified to 100 metres).
- Playgrounds, pools, waterparks, or any spray pad (50 metres has been modified to 100 metres).
- Private property line (5 metres has been modified to 10 metres).

A shift from a 50-metre to a 100-metre setback from playgrounds, in particular, does introduce a number of limitations on potential encampment locations, particularly in the downtown and lower city where parks tend to be a smaller size.

Where the Protocol prohibited tents in “any area identified as susceptible to flooding, erosion, slope instability, or other environmental hazards” the amended protocol now includes language added that this clause is only enforceable when it presents a risk to health and safety. While this is not a specific change to the Protocol, for clarity, and consistent with the housing-focused approach, By-law enforcement will only occur in situations related to health and safety concerns or where an encampment, tent, or temporary structure is not in conformity with the Encampment Protocol, and where there

is an alternative location permitted by the protocol, or where alternative accommodation exists within the City's emergency shelter or housing system.

Additionally, some notable changes, based on public feedback, have been made to the Protocol to ensure greater clarity and ease-of-reading. A detailed review of public feedback regarding the Encampment Protocol was conducted and staff rationale for changes and non-changes to the Protocol, is attached in Appendix "B".

To address direction from Council and to ensure individuals living in encampments are given a reasonable ability to comply with the Protocol, a set of measures has been included in the Protocol to inform residents of nearby compliant sites in the case of any enforcement measures, and to ensure no residents are facing enforcement measures without being made aware of sanctioned and permitted sites where they can go.

An updated Encampment Protocol inclusive of all changes being proposed to Council for adoption is attached as Appendix "A".

Enforcement

Staff are recommending that the City's encampment response continue to follow a housing-focused approach. The recommended enforcement process is defined within the Protocol attached as Appendix "A". The City's Licensing and By-law Services Division will dedicate the two officers previously approved by Council through Report HSC20038(f)/PED21188(c) to the City's encampment response, as well, staff are recommending through this report the addition of a Supervisor role. This staffing level will allow staff to maintain the existing Monday to Friday level of service, and a four-day response time.

Removal of Waste and Debris

Respondents in the public consultations were strongly in support of prioritizing garbage removal and management throughout the City, for the health and safety of individuals living in encampments and the broader public. As encampments have grown, there is an increased need to ensure sufficient resources for removal of waste and debris. To address updated service levels that ensure ongoing maintenance throughout the City including regular pickups at established encampment sites (not including the sanctioned HATS site), as well as cleaning and maintenance within three days of an encampment being abandoned (with discretion for extenuating circumstances such as inclement weather), additional staffing and equipment is required. An in-house team made up of a Parks Lead Hand and 2 operators who would report to the existing Parks encampment response supervisor is recommended to be able to provide an enhanced clean up response and would be available daily Monday to Friday for cleanup efforts throughout the parks system. In addition to this increase, existing funding would continue to cover the staff costs for overtime and contracted services as required.

Jurisdictional Scan of Protocols, Sanctioned Sites, and Operating Models

While staff are not recommending sanctioned sites at this time, at Council direction, staff reviewed the cities across Canada that have implemented encampment protocols to manage the location of, and expectations of staff when interacting with encampments within a community. The scan included Halifax, Kingston, Toronto, Brantford, Niagara Region, St. Catharines, London, Windsor, Sudbury, Thunder Bay, Winnipeg, Edmonton, Prince George, Vancouver, and Victoria, as well as other smaller municipalities. Additionally, several municipalities across the United States also utilize protocols.

While the content of each protocol contains different goals, processes, and restrictions based upon unique local circumstances, all protocols identify key partners involved in encampment response, roles and responsibilities, areas of the city where camping is not permitted, and a process to manage encampments in non-permitted areas.

Other items contained within protocols include shared principles, process(es) for managing abandoned sites and/or site maintenance and cleaning, and approach to connect individuals to housing alternatives.

Approaches to Sanctioned Site Encampments

Jurisdictions across Canada have implemented sanctioned encampments including Victoria, Toronto, Waterloo Region, Fredericton, Halifax and Winnipeg. To increase the breadth of analysis, several jurisdictions in the United States were also included, such as Portland, Chicago, Tacoma, Denver and Oakland. Each of these sites was analyzed to compare approaches to providing overnight accommodations, operating models, and where possible, outcomes.

As part of a jurisdictional scan of sanctioned encampments in North America, operating models include a) sanctioned self-governed low barrier models; b) sanctioned, fully managed low barrier models; c) sanctioned, fully managed medium-high barrier models, and; d) transitional models. For means of comparison, each of the approaches were compared to a supportive housing model, which was also reviewed for cost and effectiveness by staff.

Staff reviewed potential operating models to be utilized within a sanctioned site (for a more comprehensive analysis of operating models, see Appendix “D”). Staff approximated the costs associated with providing this service for approximately 150 individuals who are living unsheltered in encampments (i.e., the City would require six sanctioned sites with a capacity of 25 per site to ensure service was available to every individual presently living within an encampment).

Utilizing benchmarks from other jurisdictions operating similar low barrier models and costing estimates using our local context wherever possible, the costs associated with

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providing this level of service is significant, ranging from \$2.8M and \$8.1M to provide adequate staffing, food, and access to drinking water, washrooms, electricity, lockers and personal belongings safekeeping, and a heating and cooling common area, across six sanctioned sites. A range is provided to address several options available for implementation (i.e., staffing levels, food service). It should also be noted that there are significant risks to operating an under-resourced sanctioned site for individuals who are unsheltered with complex, co-occurring needs, particularly as it relates to adequate staffing.

Given that resources to address housing and homelessness are limited, and significant feedback was provided by respondents for permanent, sustainable options, applying funding to several sanctioned sites would result in significantly fewer funds available to address other acute areas within the housing and homelessness sector, namely transitional housing with supports. Across municipalities, there is little clarity regarding the long-term success of transitioning individuals staying in sanctioned encampments into permanent housing, as funds spent on emergency services often come at the expense of more permanent housing options.

Notably, other jurisdictions (i.e., Kingston and Edmonton) have come to similar conclusions regarding sanctioned encampments sites and have instead proposed new funding towards housing and other indoor shelter alternatives.

For additional jurisdictional scan details, including further analysis of potential operating models and operational principles and recommendations associated with low barrier models within sanctioned encampments, see Appendix “D”.

Site Criteria

As mentioned, staff are not recommending sanctioned sites at this time, however, following Council direction, staff used the work of the jurisdictional scan and professional experience to establish the following criteria where a potential sanctioned site might be identified if sanctioned sites were to be implemented:

- sites are immediately available (no current construction/disruption),
- site can be available within 1-2 months without significant site preparation,
- existing washrooms on site,
- access to drinking water and whether it is winterized,
- access to communal hydro connections for personal use,
- ability to provide a sense of privacy,
- readily accessible by service vehicles and emergency vehicles,
- safely accessible by foot,
- access to transit,
- accessible by waste vehicles and storage,
- near to downtown core,

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- able to be compliant with protocol,
- site would not occupy or make unavailable public park space in an area or neighbourhood where park space is in limited supply,
- provides access to shade,
- site would not prevent or preclude special events where major public special events are held, and
- site is near where existing encampments are located.

After applying these criteria to existing park space, several sites were partially or fully able to meet these criteria either immediately or with minimum changes. These sites included Alexander Park, Strachan Avenue Linear Park, Woodlands Park -east side, Confederation Park, Mohawk Sports Park – north side of parking area in unprogrammed space, Turner Park – north of ballpark, and Valley Park – north side. As mentioned, although these sites matched the criteria, and demonstrate where sanctioned sites might be feasible if explored in the future, sanctioned sites are not being recommended by staff at this time. However, it should be noted that The Strachan Avenue Linear Park located between Hughson Street and James Street was identified through this approach and has been identified as the preferred site for HATs and is being recommended for the purpose of identifying a low-barrier alternative model for individuals living within encampments.

Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters

Within Hamilton, and in alignment with the jurisdictional scan, there is a need for a low barrier emergency option for individuals who are unsheltered. As such, contingent upon the City providing a site, Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters is prepared to operate a two-year pilot, providing a fully managed site with appropriate services and supports for up to 25 tiny shelters. This is a cost-neutral pilot for the City, as Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters is a community-led initiative and has privately fundraised to support the operation of the site.

The Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters will address an existing gap in the City's current approach to emergency overnight space and will provide a new option for those who have complex, co-occurring needs and are not interested in traditional emergency shelter.

To support Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters in the operationalization of their pilot program, staff are recommending that the pilot program be located on the preferred site of the parking area on the Strachan Avenue linear park, or at an alternative site that meets the criteria for the Protocol and is determined appropriate by staff. In the longer term it is recommended that the Scout House site be considered as a site for Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters and for this to happen changes are required at the property to address safety concerns (e.g. installation of sidewalks, etc.).

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As part of an agreement with Hamilton Alliance for Tiny Shelters to operate the pilot program, prospective individuals residing at the site must be selected via the City's By-Name List, which provides the City with an up-to-date understanding of individuals experiencing homelessness in the community and establishes an individual's suitability for a particular housing. The results from this pilot will be evaluated on an ongoing basis and will inform the City's future encampment response.

Services and Supports within the Protocol

Consistent with a human rights-based approach and the National Protocol for Homeless Encampments in Canada, and supported by stakeholders, City staff and the public, Council directed staff to address washrooms, showers, and access to drinking water for individuals who are unsheltered in the community, as well as to integrate Indigenous and peer supports into the Protocol.

a) Access to Washrooms, Showers, and Drinking Water

Staff are recommending provision of washroom access using existing recreation and City Parks facilities by expanding hours of operation and staffing and providing security. Building new washrooms is not recommended given the time and resources required. The cost of building new winterized washroom facilities, is very high and requires significant planning and construction time. The cost for a new single, winterized washroom is between \$1.75M and \$2.25M and requires a minimum of 18-months to implement. Portable showering trailers and self-cleaning showers were investigated but are not being recommended, due to high up-front costs and operating fees, challenges in identifying potential vendors, as well as concerns with ongoing maintenance and repair. The City previously operated port-o-lets during COVID-19 and struggled with maintaining facilities in working order.

To support the implementation of this initiative, Housing Focused Street Outreach have partnered with Recreation Division and City Parks to identify potential sites available to provide services to individuals who are living in encampments. Staff is recommending an upset limit of \$987,840 be provided annually to support individuals who are unsheltered in encampments to access washrooms, drinking water, and showers, in the most suitable locations given patterns of encamped individuals and in alignment with a rights-based approach to encampment response. This will provide the City with the funds to hire 24/7 security (one guard) at 2 outdoor, existing washrooms in parks (\$525,600) and 12-hour security (one guard) at 2 recreation centres (\$262,800), each for 365 days along with the maintenance costs associated with each.

The security guard will be responsible for providing oversight and ensure a harm-reduction focused approach to service delivery. Assigned security staff will receive Naloxone, and additional harm reduction training to support individuals who access the service.

City staff are also recommending resourcing to ensure that individuals who access showers, both within parks and in community or recreational facilities, be provided with the hygiene supplies and other sundry items necessary to maintain their hygiene. These costs will be managed within existing budget.

Council provided direction to staff to transition existing encampment response team resources to the new Protocol and encampment response. Staff have been able to convert one Housing Outreach worker funded in the initial response to an Indigenous Worker, in response to Council direction. The remaining resources approved by Council in the 2023 budget earlier this year will continue to be required for the response proposed in this report, and additional resources are required due to the growing encampment situation, in order to maintain existing service levels related to removal or garbage and debris, and by-law officer response times and enforcement of the Protocol as well as respond to Council direction related to services and supports

b) Integration of Peer Supports

While it can take considerable time for staff to build trust with individuals living unsheltered, peers can often act as a bridge between staff and those individuals and can also provide specialized expertise because of their uniquely similar experiences. Peers are also integral to overdose prevention. Statistically, peers are the most likely to be first responders to an overdose and should be equipped with the tools and training to engage in effective overdose prevention techniques. Peer workers can provide harm reduction education and training to City staff, frontline staff, and individuals living in encampments, and can also play a role supporting the cleaning of encampment sites, particularly needle debris and other paraphernalia. To formalize this work, peers with lived or living experience of encampments with a focus on harm reduction are being recommended to become part of the City's Housing Focused Street Outreach team.

While both peer support workers and Housing Focused Street Outreach workers play crucial roles in supporting individuals experiencing homelessness, their approaches and focuses differ. Peer support workers leverage their lived experiences to provide a unique form of emotional and practical support, while Housing Focused Street Outreach workers are trained to understand and connect individuals with the necessary resources and services to address their needs. Combining both approaches can lead to more comprehensive and effective support for those facing homelessness and related challenges. The cost to add an additional 2 FTE of a Housing Focused Street Outreach worker is \$60,950 (\$30,475 per FTE). Staff will need to work with individuals with lived/living experience to determine roles and responsibilities at encampments.

c) Integration of Indigenous Supports

To provide expertise in integrating and implementing a culturally appropriate approach, the City has partnered with the Hamilton Regional Indian Centre to fund, within existing

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approved budget one FTE towards an outreach worker that will remain as part of Hamilton Regional Indian Centre's staffing complement as part of its Mobile Street Outreach Van. Hamilton Regional Indian Centre will lead the outreach response their staff are taking to address the needs of Indigenous peoples living in encampments and will bring their expertise as participants in the City's Coordinated Response Team, and proposed committee, which will also include people with lived/living experience, community stakeholders involved in frontline response, and relevant City staff. Adding an Indigenous staff to the City's outreach complement is a first step in an iterative process of establishing culturally appropriate frontline services for people living in encampments.

d) Development of an Encampment Liaison Committee

Upon the adoption of the Encampment Protocol, Housing Focused Street Outreach develop a liaison committee to ensure that individuals with lived/living experience of encampments, frontline operators, and staff are all meaningfully engaged in providing input into Hamilton's encampment response. The table will convene on a regular basis to discuss overall encampment response in the community and discuss approaches to sustain continuous improvement. Staff will collaborate with key stakeholders including Keeping Six, HAMSMaRT, Hamilton Regional Indian Centre, and Hamilton Encampment Support Network (to help recruit people with lived/living experience for the committee), to develop terms of reference for the committee that identifies goals, scope, and desired outcomes. This may include a review process to address issues should concerns arise from individuals living unsheltered, community agencies or housed individuals in the community that the Protocol is not being implemented appropriately.

It is important to note that any changes to the Protocol itself, including the implementation process defined therein, would require a report to Council and Council approval. Furthermore, the committee would not have the authority to direct enforcement or to establish or alter City service levels. Development of this process will also require advisement from the City's Legal department.

Alignment to Permanent Housing Solutions

Given the benefits of permanent, appropriate transitional housing with supports, its alignment with a housing first approach, ability to address basic needs, and the cost-effectiveness of housing as a solution, staff are recommending that in lieu of recommending several sanctioned sites throughout the community, that available resources are directed towards permanent supportive housing solutions. Recommendations related to investments that will address the needs of unsheltered individuals are contained within the report "Addressing the Needs of Unsheltered Individuals and Shelter Capacity" on the same August 14, 2023 General Issues Committee meeting agenda.

ALTERNATIVES FOR CONSIDERATION

1. Council could direct staff to identify suitable locations for and implement a sanctioned site model with services and supports. This approach would come with significant financial cost to the City.
2. Council could choose to increase the City's financial investment and expand the number of washrooms staffed throughout the City to meet the needs of those unsheltered in more areas, across a broader geographic distance.

APPENDICES AND SCHEDULES ATTACHED

Appendix "A" to Report HSC20036(g): Updated Encampment Protocol

Appendix "B" to Report HSC20036(g): Rationale for Updates to Encampment Protocol

Appendix "C" to Report HSC20036(g): 'What we Heard' Public Consultation Report

Appendix "D" to Report HSC20036(g): Jurisdictional Scan of Sanctioned Sites and Operating Models

Outdoor Overnight Sheltering in Designated Sites

The City is working collaboratively with its housing and social sector partners to reset the [Journey Home Strategy](#) so goals and targets are well matched to current conditions and challenges, and to ultimately eliminate the need for anyone to shelter outside.

A new temporary, outdoor sheltering site at the intersection of Richter Street and the Rail Trail will replace the old site at 890 Baillie Avenue at the beginning of May 2021. The site will be closer to services, and landscape, tree and plant features will better separate it from the Rail Trail. Input into the design from the Lived Experience Circle on Homelessness (LECoH), Bylaw Services and the Kelowna RCMP will optimize safety and security, while also meeting basic needs for people sheltering there.

The City has a legal obligation

When there is insufficient housing and shelter space for people experiencing homelessness, the law in British Columbia requires that the City may not prohibit all its parks and public spaces from being used for temporary overnight sheltering for those who do not have a home. The City can, however, identify which parks or public spaces the prohibition against overnight sheltering will not be applied.

Portable washrooms, waste receptacles and sharps containers will be provided at the designated site.

This is not a long-term solution

Homelessness is an evolving, dynamic crisis in our community. Since 2017, 318 units of supportive housing have been added in Kelowna, including the most recent addition of McCurdy Place in March 2021. Despite the significant progress we have made with our partners in recent years, the number of people sheltering continues to exceed emergency shelter capacity. Municipalities continue to try and manage the downstream consequences resulting from poverty, lack of affordable and social housing, mental health and addiction issues.

The City and its partners are working to renew the [Journey Home Strategy](#) to make sure goals and targets match the current situation and challenges, so that we can eliminate the need for anyone to shelter outdoors. When there are enough shelter beds and/or housing to accommodate those in need, temporary overnight sheltering in public spaces will no longer be legally required or permitted by the City.

Previous News

Mar 2021 - [A new approach to shelters founded on choice, community, safety, healing](#)

Mar 2021 - [Achieving progress on our targets - more than 300 units of housing with supports now built](#) [🔗](#)

Sept 2020 - [Journey Home working with multiple levels of government to provide housing and shelter solutions](#) [🔗](#)

Dec 2019 - [Changes to Recreation Ave Designated Outdoor Overnight Sheltering site](#)

Dec 2019 - [Welcome Inn Temporary Shelter Announcement](#) [🔗](#), [📄 Welcome Inn FAQs](#), [📄 Call for staff and volunteers](#)

Dec 2019 - [Fuller Ave Temporary Housing Announcement](#) [🔗](#), [📄 FAQs](#), [📄 Fact Sheet](#)

More information about temporary overnight sheltering

+ [When will construction start?](#)

+ [How long will construction last?](#)



+ When will the site be operational?

+ Why is the City replacing the old outdoor sheltering site with this new one?

– How long will this site be used?

This site is temporary and there is no intention it will become a permanent fixture. The City's aim is for every Kelowna resident to have access to shelter, at which time an outdoor sheltering site will no longer be needed. The City has made significant progress toward this goal with partners, including the Central Okanagan Journey Home Society, the provincial government and many others.

+ What happens to the site when it is no longer needed for outdoor sheltering?

– What kind of security measures will be in place at the site?

The site will be monitored by security personnel as well as closed-circuit television (CCTV). The site is designed according to crime prevention through environmental design (CPTED) principles, which include clear sightlines, ample lighting and multiple points for access and egress. The site is located near emergency services, which will limit response times in the case police, ambulance, fire or other services are needed. [↗](#)

– What kind of maintenance services will be available at the site?

Garbage is picked up, portable toilets are serviced and the onsite sharps disposal box is emptied on a daily basis.

– How much is this going to cost?

Research indicates it's much more cost effective to house people than not to do anything. At this time, we're responding to an emergent issue and a very challenging situation to make sure that the people sheltering outdoors are safe. The true costs of the overall response will likely not be known for some time.

– When are people allowed to occupy the site?

Sheltering at the site will be permitted overnight from 6 p.m. to 9 a.m. each day.

+ What will happen to the current outdoor sheltering site (890 Baillie Avenue)?

Community Risk Reduction

ISSUE

This report provides an update on unsafe and inadequate housing situations that the Saskatoon Fire Department's (SFD) Community Risk Reduction (CRR) team addresses and identifies within Saskatoon.

BACKGROUND

Addressing unsafe and inadequate housing is within SFD's role and responsibility such as closing unsafe housing and offering rehousing options. In November of 2021, the SFD changed processes to address unsafe conditions. Fire Inspectors started to record, track, and identify the who, what, where, and why individuals were living unhoused, in accessory buildings, vacant houses, and public spaces of occupied structures such as apartment hallways.

The data is mapped and tracked for high-level reporting purposes to internal and external partnering agencies, such as, but not limited to:

- Ministry of Social Services,
- Saskatchewan Health Authority,
- Saskatoon Police Service (SPS), and
- Outreach organizations.

CURRENT STATUS

Fire Bylaw and Fire Inspectors receive reports of inadequate housing situations and approach the individuals affected in a respectful, discreet, and dignified manner. Together, SFD and the individuals, will look for a solution to determine an adequate form of housing/sleeping based on the opportunities and circumstances surrounding each person's background/history. Supports, such as transportation, shelter, connection back to friends or family, social services, food, and water, are most often provided.

Relationship building and trust between the Fire Inspectors and the individuals is crucial. Eighty percent of individuals will accept some form of support or allow regular check-ins by Fire Inspectors who ensure no hazards exist and will continue to offer supports.

DISCUSSION/ANALYSIS

Saskatoon has 67 neighborhoods. The following table indicates where inadequate and outdoor living was identified:

Community Risk Reduction

Inadequately Housed	2021	2022	2023 (June 25)
# of Encampments	116	512	290
Neighborhoods	27	53	44
Inadequately Housed Individuals	43	221	85
Known Repeat Interactions	6	39	22
Fire/Bylaw Inspector Response Hours	650	3,900	1,950

Appendix 1 shows further breakdown of encampments that were identified in Saskatoon, per neighbourhood, from 2021 to June 25, 2023.

SPS and SFD have developed a joint safety plan. This has been achieved through collaboration and information sharing with a focus on the “hot spots” (areas where calls for service have higher frequency). Through data analysis, it has been identified that SPS and SFD are interacting with the same individuals and/or same areas at times that create “hot spots”. The initial goal is to analyze and synergize a coordinated approach to diminish redundancy and gaps in service.

Data was generated using criteria of fires, overdoses, graffiti, needle pick-ups, vacant/boarded structures, property maintenance concerns, and unhoused locations. This analysis identified key neighbourhoods being impacted the most. Neighbourhoods showing the highest number of incidents, using these key indicators, over a five-year comparison from 2018 to 2022 are as follows:

- Pleasant Hill,
- Mayfair,
- Riversdale,
- Caswell Hill,
- Meadowgreen,
- Massey Place, and
- King George

Since November of 2021, 40% of known individuals to SFD have taken supports and have been successfully rehoused.

In 2023, there is a notable increase of individuals identified as inadequately housed that are new to the Fire Inspectors. Also, through SFD staff expertise addictions and reluctance to accept housing or emergency shelter are compounding the current situation in Saskatoon.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

There are no financial implications.

OTHER IMPLICATIONS

To support unsafe and inadequately housed individuals equates to two full-time Fire Bylaw Inspectors. This impacts the number of property maintenance inspections and fire inspections conducted.

NEXT STEPS

The Administration will continue to review data and report back.

APPENDICES

1. 2021-2023 Neighbourhood Encampments

Report Approval

Written by: Yvonne Raymer, Assistant Chief, Saskatoon Fire Department
Approved by: Morgan Hackl, Fire Chief, Saskatoon Fire Department

Admin Report - Community Risk Reduction.docx



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Sheltering in Parks

We are committed to keeping park activities safe for everyone, including park visitors, City staff who work in parks, and people seeking temporary shelter.

The City continues to work closely with the Province and BC Housing, as well as community agencies, to find housing and supports for people experiencing homelessness in our community.

Victoria's Housing Strategy includes several policies to address housing and affordability in our community and provides guidance for housing policies and initiatives that meet residents' needs across the housing continuum.

While we work to end homelessness in our community, our focus remains on finding ways to support our most vulnerable residents and manage sheltering in parks as safely as possible for everyone.

Rules for Overnight Sheltering in Parks

As of May 1, 2021, daytime shelters are not allowed in City of Victoria parks. However, people experiencing homelessness may shelter overnight in some parks from 7 p.m. to 7 a.m. (8 p.m. to 7 a.m. during Daylight Saving Time). Recreational camping is not allowed in City of Victoria parks.

Anyone experiencing homelessness can contact BC Housing at 1-800-257-7756 (toll-free) to receive an application form and begin the process of moving into a safe indoor space.

People experiencing homelessness can shelter overnight in some City parks while following some basic rules. For more details, view the Parks Regulation Bylaw and the amendment bylaw adopted on July 8, 2021.

- Sheltering is not permitted in environmentally or culturally sensitive areas, playgrounds, sports fields, community gardens and horticultural areas, footpaths/roads, cemeteries or on medians/boulevards
- For safety and bylaw compliance, shelters must be:
 - No bigger than nine square metres (approximately 10 ft x 10 ft)
 - Spaced four metres (13 ft) apart
 - Four metres (13 ft) from no-shelter areas or private property lines
 - Eight metres (26 ft) from playgrounds
 - 50 metres (164 ft) from school property

- For safety, environmental protection, and bylaw compliance, please do not:
 - Locate shelters directly under trees and branches
 - Attach shelters to trees, plants, benches, lamp posts or other structures
 - Have fires or open flame appliances or combustibles, except for approved BBQs in allowable areas and at least two metres from any structures or no-shelter areas
 - Remove tree branches or use City property to construct shelters

View the Overnight Sheltering in Parks handout and maps [PDF - 8 MB] of parks with washrooms where overnight sheltering is allowed.

Areas Where Sheltering is Not Allowed

People sheltering in parks need access to washrooms and running water. The City has identified some parks in our Overnight Sheltering in Parks handout that have facilities and are most suitable for temporary overnight sheltering.

However, there are parks where sheltering is currently not allowed at any time. They are:

- Arbutus Park
- Bastion Square
- Beacon Hill Park
- Cecelia Ravine Park
- Centennial Square
- Central Park
- Coffin Island
- Cridge Park
- David Spencer Park
- Haegert Park
- Kings Park
- MacDonald Park
- Moss Rocks Park
- Oaklands Green
- Pandora Green
- Pioneer Square
- Quadra Park
- Queens Avenue Playlot
- Reeson Park
- Robert Porter Park
- Ross Bay Cemetery
- South Park
- Summit Park

How are rules communicated?

Bylaw officers actively work with people in parks to ensure regulations are understood and followed. Signage is posted in several parks where sheltering is allowed to further remind everyone of the rules. An Overnight Sheltering in Parks handout is available from bylaw officers which clearly communicates sheltering rules.

In addition, the City's Neighbourhood Team is in regular contact with neighbourhood associations and community groups about all City matters, including sheltering in parks.

How is the bylaw enforced?

The City is using an individualized approach to bylaw enforcement. Bylaw Services tracks who is sheltering where, whether they have been offered housing, whether they have accepted the offer, and where and when they are expected to move inside.

People who accept an offer and are preparing to move from parks will not be required to pack up daily. Bylaw officers will allow time for moving into the transitional housing locations and will assist with downsizing belongings. When indoor spaces are ready, Bylaw and outreach workers will assist people with packing their items in totes and helping people move.

Effective May 1, 2021, people who do not accept an offer will be required to take down, pack up and remove their tent and belongings daily by 7 a.m. Any tent or property unlawfully left in place after 7 a.m. will be subject to impound and can be retrieved through Bylaw Services.

City Council has authorized the City Manager and City Solicitor to proceed with a court injunction to enforce the Parks Regulation Bylaw should voluntary compliance not be achieved.

How can I help people experiencing homelessness?

If you would like to assist, please reach out to one of the agencies helping the most vulnerable in our community with meals, housing, health and wellness, education, and practical care. Please do not drop off furniture or other property in parks or on boulevards.

Where can I find information about emergency shelters?

The Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness has information about emergency shelters to provide immediate, overnight and temporary accommodations for anyone who is homeless or at risk of homelessness. Check the Victoria Shelter Quick Sheet for current information.

Contacts

For removal of garbage or hypodermic needles in a park, contact Parks with the address and location of the item(s) and our caretaking crew will come and pick it up.

- parks@victoria.ca
- 250.361.0600 (24 hrs)

In addition, the ConnectVictoria app is a fast and easy way residents can take a picture of the issue, pinpoint it on a map, and submit it directly to City staff from their phone. The app can be found in the iTunes or Google Play app stores under the name ConnectVictoria.

To report a bylaw violation:

Bylaw Services

- Online form: <https://www.victoria.ca/EN/main/city/bylaw-enforcement/report-a-bylaw-violation.html>

- Email bylawservices@victoria.ca (7 days a week, 7 a.m.–4:30 p.m.)
- Phone 250.361.0215 (Monday to Friday, 8 a.m.–4:30 p.m.)

To report crime and community safety concerns:

Victoria Police

- Phone 9-1-1 for emergencies or crimes in progress and 250.995.7654 for non-emergencies
-



940 CALEDONIA

A Framework for Sanctioned, Self-Managed & Supported Encampments for People Experiencing Homelessness

“This is where we start from. All this work.
We don’t start at the bottom. We have this information here.”
~Peer Researcher who lived at Central Park & 940 Caledonia



greater victoria
coalition to end
homelessness
hope has found a home

PURPOSE

June 21, 2019, Bill C-97, containing the federal right to housing legislation, was signed into Canadian law. Currently, there is not enough housing for all people who need and want it. Until there is enough appropriate shelter and housing, there is a need for interim solutions that support people with safe access to basic human needs, shelter, warmth, food, and hygiene.

The documentary *940 Caledonia* highlights the journey of individuals evacuated from an unsanctioned and unstructured encampment in Victoria, British Columbia (BC) to what became a sanctioned, self-managed, and supported encampment during the COVID-19 pandemic.

This document provides a framework for future encampments, based on participatory action engagement¹ facilitated by the Greater Victoria Coalition to End Homelessness (GVCEH) and conducted by people with lived experience of homelessness and peers who were living in the encampments. The initial unsanctioned encampment was located at Central Park, and the subsequent, sanctioned encampment was located at 940 Caledonia Avenue, located on the homelands of the Lekwungen Peoples, known today as the Songhees and Esquimalt Nations.

This documentary and engagement would not have been possible without the trust, time, patience, and heartfelt work of the folks who stepped into peer researcher roles, and those who participated in the engagement activities. They supported this engagement during an incredibly grim time while experiencing homelessness, stigma, and an unusually cold winter during a global pandemic. They did so with wisdom, kindness, patience, and humour. It is our hope we can reflect their efforts respectfully.

¹ Engagement to Inform the City of Victoria Policy Regarding Encampments - Engaging People Currently Sheltering Out-of-Doors - Final Report, (Vanchu-Orosco M., Theobald J.)
https://victoriahomelessness.ca/wp-content/uploads/2021/04/2021.04.22_GVCEH_COTW_Report-final.pdf

BACKGROUND

Encampments where persons experiencing homelessness shelter are neither uncommon, nor localized to any one community in the province, the country and beyond. Over the years, there have been encampments in Victoria, some clandestine, others more conspicuous, such as the 2016 Super In-Tent City on the grounds of the BC Provincial Courthouse.

In March of 2020, in an unprecedented response to the declaration of a global pandemic, service providers, and shelter operators had to close or reduce the number of people they could serve. People who were couch surfing could no longer stay with friends. We were told to ‘stay home’ and ‘shelter in place’ but because some people had no place to follow these orders, temporary shelters began to pop up in parks and on boulevards in the City of Victoria. Although these locations were unsanctioned, as an interim measure, the City of Victoria paused enforcement of bylaws which prohibit erection of shelters between the hours of 7:00 a.m. and 8:00 p.m. and sheltering on boulevards. Encampments grew and services, such as water and washrooms (portable toilets), food, health care, and harm reduction supports were deployed to the various outdoor sheltering locations through coordinated efforts of the City, the health authority, service providers, community members and grassroots groups.

‘Encampments are touted as sites of increased safety and security by advocates.

As encampments increase in size however, incidents of crime and risk to personal safety can also increase, especially for women and youth.’²

SFU Student Research Series – Homeless Encampments in British Columbia

During the COVID-19 pandemic, as encampments grew, opposition increased. While there were mutual aid, peer support, community, safety, and resources shared and accessible in the encampments, incidents of violence and other crimes were reported within and near the encampments. In an already uncertain time, actual and perceived fears were amplified in community, and through social and traditional media. It became an ongoing challenge to support people to follow public health advice by sheltering in place and to acknowledge the concerns of housed neighbours near the encampments. In response, the City of Victoria passed a Motion to engage people currently sheltering in parks in solution development and creation of encampment guidelines, and to look at the potential benefits of ‘managed encampments.’

GVCEH agreed to facilitate the engagement. Peer researchers were hired and trained, and a plan to engage the approximately 220 people³ sheltering in the various City parks was created. However, due to team capacity and the November 2020 reinstatement of Provincial Health Orders prohibiting gathering, the focus of the engagement became Central Park, and subsequently 940 Caledonia. The GVCEH did not anticipate this engagement would turn into a case study of a sanctioned, self-managed, and supported encampment.

² SFU Student Research Series – Homeless Encampments in British Columbia (Bhatnagar D., Hartmann J., Mozisek R., Neill T., Williams A.)

<https://www.bchousing.org/publications/Homeless-Encampments-in-British-Columbia-Report-Oct-21.pdf>

³ Homeless to Sheltered – Victoria Updates, BC Housing <https://www.bchousing.org/homeless-to-sheltered-victoria>

CASE STUDY SUMMARY: CENTRAL PARK/940 CALEDONIA⁴ (Sept. 3, 2020 – Mar. 31, 2021)

Data Collection

- GVCEH hired and trained 13 peer researchers including 7 who were sheltering outdoors and 5 with previous lived experiences of homelessness.
- Peer researchers conducted 18 one-on-one interviews and administered 49 questionnaires to persons sheltering in Central Park.
- Peer researchers conducted 4 focus groups (n=15) with persons sheltering at 940 Caledonia.
- Peer researchers participated in 1 Peer Researcher focus group and debrief.
- GVCEH administered an online questionnaire to North Park housed neighbours of Central Park and 940 Caledonia (n=35).
- GVCEH conducted 1 community association focus group (n=4).

Engagement Activities & Community Support

- The North Park Neighbourhood Association (NPNA) provided a table with a tent and created a message board at the Central Park encampment, and invited encampment residents to speak at NPNA community meetings.
- Weekly talking circles were held in Central Park (Wednesdays) with encampment residents, service providers, peers, neighbours, Peer Researchers, and NPNA members.
 - Talking circles supported relationship building by sharing experiences and information.
- GVCEH and NPNA held weekly engagement meetings (Thursdays) at the Royal Athletic Park, in September and October.
 - These meetings were structured with agenda items and were an opportunity to create a feedback loop and to report on any action items.
- NPNA collected information through the regular engagements and communications with encampment residents which enabled them to apply for and receive a Red Cross grant.
 - The grant was initially intended to support the Central Park encampment, but ultimately became the key vector for supporting 940 Caledonia.⁵

940 Caledonia

A housed senior from the neighbourhood made sandwiches on Fridays and delivered them tent by tent at Central Park and 940 Caledonia.

940 Caledonia

At one of the engagement meetings NPNA offered to supply pallets to help people get their tents off the ground. A camp resident shared the need to have plywood on top of the pallets to ensure safety in the tents.

“We need staffing solutions for our encampments to show we can come up with solutions.

Give us space to do it: i.e., security, monitoring warming tents, safety.”

“[We] need stipends for people to staff – not other people to doing it for us.”

~Notes from encampment residents at engagement meeting, October 29th

⁴ See footnote 1 for full report

⁵ Canadian Red Cross Grant Evaluation - Application 1067 (Holtby D., NPNA) https://npna.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/03/Canadian-Red-Cross_-_R2Grant-0000001067-Project-Evaluation.pdf

DEFINITIONS

Sanctioned

- The city, municipality, or property owner agrees to not enforce bylaws or proceed with removal of tents and temporary shelters.
- People are permitted to set up or erect temporary 24-hour shelters in the location.
 - If shelters are not abandoned, conform to the allocated space allowance, and allow for emergency vehicle access they will not be removed.
- The site needs to be respected and protected as part of whatever neighbourhood it is located.

“Ending Street Sweeps [removal of unsanctioned shelters and belongings] will create an opportunity for the City to foster peer-led programming and initiatives that are directed by people with lived and living experiences of homelessness and reliance on public space.”

~2022 Street Sweeps Report⁶

Self-Managed

- Sites are not staffed 24-hours.
- Site residents work with municipality or service providers to determine roles in the encampment that will meet the safety and security needs of the encampment residents and surrounding community members.
 - Residents can engage to whatever degree they wish.

940 Caledonia

Resident roles included park liaison, park cleaning team, food delivery, maintenance, and social media.

Warming tent was staffed by a service provider 8 hours a day.

Supported

- Basic needs (24-hour accessible washrooms, handwashing and drinking water, garbage and recycling containers and removal, electrical access or lighting), if not already at the site, are brought to the locations through the city, municipality, or property owner.
- Funding is allocated for stipend or honorarium-based roles.
- Funding is allocated and managed for supplies and in-reach service provision, such as warming tents.
- Service provision is coordinated for in-reach harm reduction, health, social, and peer supports.
- Fire prevention education and supplies are provided.
- Site is attended regularly and consistently by ‘decision-makers’ or their representatives to ensure voices of encampment residents are included in any plans or decisions being made about the location.

⁶ #Stop the Sweeps: Ending Cyclical Displacement & Criminalized Poverty in Vancouver (Mannoe, M.)

https://assets.nationbuilder.com/pivotlegal/pages/3632/attachments/original/1651281879/2022_Street_Sweeps_Report_Final.pdf

RECOMMENDATIONS

Advance Planning

Whether encampments for people experiencing homelessness arise out of an emergency, such as a global pandemic or extreme weather, or as an interim response to lack of adequate shelter or housing, strategies need to be developed prior to such events. Many individuals and organizations came together to support the evacuation of Central Park. This was reactive and difficult work. The efforts of community members stepping up in the absence of a coordinated response cannot be understated. It is recommended that:

- All levels of government review current emergency response plans and ensure they include supports for individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Municipalities and regional authorities create planning committees, which include people with lived and living experience, to review existing resources and practices and develop localized plans for interim sheltering locations.
- A coordinator is designated (similar to the Vancouver Board of Parks and Recreation’s Director, Urban Relationships position ⁷) to be responsible for oversight and communication of the ongoing process to set up, maintain and support an encampment. This is best done in collaboration with the service providers, community members and encampment residents; however, one position or body must hold ultimate accountability.

940 Caledonia

Although the NPNA stepped up as good neighbours to support the people initially camping at Central Park, and eventually 940 Caledonia, and even with access financial resources through the Red Cross funding, this was an incredibly taxing effort for this volunteer organization. The efforts were reactive to an emergency and there was not any one agency or organization as a key point of contact for the encampment (refer to footnote 5 for full report).

“Sometimes it feels like the solutions were too late, like the permits for the warming tent, or waiting until after Central Park flooded to move people.”

~GVCEH Peer Researcher

⁷ <https://www.theglobeandmail.com/canada/british-columbia/article-vancouver-appoints-official-to-manage-homelessness-in-city-parks/>

Size and Scale

Only individuals who were residing at Central Park within days of the flooding on December 21st, 2020, were permitted to move to the 940 Caledonia site. This limited the number of residents to approximately 30 people which was serendipitous. It is recommended that organizers keep encampments smaller in size:

- It is easier to make relationships, ensure everyone is safe and accounted for, and to facilitate a rotation for stipend-based roles.
- Allows for adequate spacing in between individual structures and enables access for emergency vehicles.
- Neighbourhoods are (potentially) more welcoming of smaller encampments.

Communications

A communication structure should be set up with people sheltering at the site to ensure they have the information they need to make informed decisions and are aware of when and how to access supports and services. Recommendations include:

- Weekly (at minimum) camp meetings in a facilitated circle with honoraria and nutritional snacks provided.
- Install a weather-proof message board and calendar for information about service providers and schedules, posting mealtimes and locations, and for message sharing.
- Handbills with upcoming events, contact information, or other information are distributed a week or a few days in advance of an event.
 - Follow-up the day before or day of the event may be necessary.
- Identify messenger residents to ensure relevant information is accurately shared because not everyone will attend circles or receive handbills.

940 Caledonia

Residents were asked to maintain a 10-foot by 10-foot footprint for their personal space, as well as pathways that would be wide enough for emergency vehicle access. This reduced the number of visits from bylaw officers which can be disruptive for residents. As time went on, bylaw officers were accompanied by a camp resident who acted as an intermediary and was able to deescalate difficult interactions.

940 Caledonia

At 8:30 a.m. there was a daily logistics huddle with camp representatives, Bylaw, NPNA, Victoria Police and service providers. Encampment residents communicated regularly in peer only meetings and noted appreciation for non-resident support and facilitation of the weekly meeting.

COMMUNITY COLLABORATION, PARTICIPATION & AGENCY

“Nothing about us without us”

Peer Support & Safety

Care for each other and the most vulnerable who are sheltering outdoors is consistently demonstrated in outdoor sheltering locations. The unsheltered community often experience violent bigotry and aggression from housed people in community. They may also experience incidents of lateral violence and predatory behaviours. People who shelter together build community which can protect against incidents of bigotry and aggression. This was demonstrated repeatedly in information collected throughout the engagement and in discussions with the Peer Research Team.

Security

Lack of nighttime security was an ongoing topic of discussion with the Peer Research Team, as well as a common theme seen in the engagement activities. Peer researchers indicated they would like to have security and de-escalation training to support safety and security in outdoor sheltering locations. After the relocation to 940 Caledonia, 24-hour security was put in place. Additionally, at night, one of the two points of entry to the site were locked. This was met with mixed reviews, while some people sheltering at 940 Caledonia reported feeling more secure as a result, others reported feeling trapped.

Site Maintenance

Individuals indicated they had a desire to live in and maintain clean sites. Many at Central Park undertook these activities, without being funded or resourced to do so. Consistent requests for more garbage receptacles were brought forward at community circles. Site resident cleaning crews at 940 Caledonia kept the location clear of garbage and cleaned the portable washrooms. Two Site Maintenance positions were created through the Red Cross funding provided by NPNA. Every shelter was elevated on pallets and plywood and were secured against the weather. Shelters were regularly maintained and repaired by people in these positions, including during windstorms, rain, and snowstorms.

Contributing to Community

When asked what skills or talents community members could contribute, answers ranged from hard skills (i.e., carpentry, hair styling, and cooking) to peer and moral support (i.e., making people laugh, and skill sharing). There was a demonstrated desire to contribute to the outdoor sheltering sites, as well as participation in the broader community.

Fifty-five percent of those responding to the Central Park survey indicated they would be willing, with adequate training and resources, to provide services. In fact, two park residents addressed City of Victoria Council on Thursday, November 12th, 2020, and offered to be trained to support facilitation of services in outdoor sheltering locations.

Community Events

Although Provincial Health Orders and the COVID-19 Pandemic were prohibitive for facilitating community events, Peer researchers were keen to hold ongoing activities that welcome all members of the community, whether housed or unhoused.

The NPNA, GVCEH Peer Researchers, and Central Park residents planned and hosted a 'Friendship BBQ' at the Royal Athletic Park on October 22nd, 2020. The event included a panel discussion about collaborative solutions to end homelessness. The panel included two people living at Central Park, an NPNA Board Director, and one person who was living in another City of Victoria park. Most housed neighbours who attended the Friendship BBQ and responded to the online questionnaire agreed it was an important event.

BASIC NEEDS

Shelter/Warmth

- Individuals should be able to leave their shelter with the expectation it will be there when they return.
 - Mechanisms to ensure shelter owners can confirm their occupation of a shelter should be created and agreed upon.
 - Items should not be removed or impounded when it is raining or snowing, or when items are wet, due to concerns of them developing mold.
- Individuals should be supplied with adequate materials to protect themselves from cold, wind, rain, sun, and snow.
- Tents and tarps are not sufficient to protect individuals from more extreme weather events and drops in temperature.
- Warming tents are recommended for sites in cooler weather.
 - They serve additional purposes acting as a gathering space and a communications/services/distribution hub with a location for signage and message boards.
 - They can be a location for electrical access.
 - Shading, cooling tents and misting stations should be considered for hot weather.
 - Can be a base for service providers to deliver in-reach supports.



940 Caledonia

Two site maintenance positions were created.

Water (Drinking & Handwashing)

- Handwashing stations should be installed with enough stations to adequately serve the number of individuals residing at the site.
 - Stations need to be regularly cleaned and stocked with soap.
- Bottled water or cisterns of drinking water need to be available if potable water is not available on site.
 - Potable water stations must be clearly marked as such, as well as marking the non-potable water sources.

Food

- Provide communal cooking areas with adequate sanitizing and fire safety resources.
- Provide adequate garbage and recycling receptacles to reduce food waste in tents and deter pests and vermin.
- Deliver food to locations where people are sheltering.

940 Caledonia

Meals were delivered twice daily to the site and encampment residents were provided an honorarium to deliver meals tent to tent.

Washroom Facilities (24-hour)

- If 24-hour accessible restroom facilities are not located at the encampment site, enough portable washrooms to adequately serve the number of individuals on-site should be brought in and serviced regularly.
 - Residents should be resourced and supported to do basic cleaning maintenance and stocking of washrooms.

940 Caledonia

Residents took care of the washroom. They were reported to be well maintained, cleaner, and had less incidents of graffiti than the portable washrooms at Central Park.

Shower Access

- If showers are not available within immediate proximity to the encampment, mobile or temporary units will need to be facilitated.
 - If mobile shower units are attending the site, schedules should be posted and shared in handbill form.
 - Temporary units can be maintained by encampment residents through stipend-based programs.

940 Caledonia

A mobile shower unit was brought to the site and residents were able to access showers at two nearby service providers.

Laundry Access⁸

- Laundry access is a key consideration for encampments.
 - Provide supports to transport residents to nearby laundry facilities.
 - Set up a laundry service for residents whereby dirty laundry is picked up, laundered, and returned.

940 Caledonia

Residents were able to access laundry facilities at a nearby service provider. When they noted some of the machines needed replacing, they started a gofundme and were able to raise over \$2400 to purchase a new laundry set (see footnote 8).

⁸ <https://www.gofundme.com/f/anawim-house-new-laundry-equipment>

Health and Harm Reduction

- People with lived and living experience (peers) of substance use are very often the first, and only, responders to overdoses in encampments.
 - Peers need to be resourced and supported to continue to do this life-saving work.
- During the COVID-19 pandemic health outreach teams were developed and deployed to provide health, harm reduction, and mental health supports in the encampments. This collaborative service delivery model was effective and appreciated.
- Static encampments facilitate consistent and ongoing health care access for individuals experiencing homelessness.
- Through the participatory action engagement, people residing at the encampments indicated a desire for ongoing counselling, dental, and medical supports.

“It’s a health condition...44 to 49 years of age, that’s the life expectancy of someone experiencing chronic homelessness in the Province of British Columbia. 44 to 49.”

~in documentary film *940 Caledonia*⁹

Safety Measures

- Share fire prevention education with residents that includes the rationale for spacing between structures and the need to not have tarps bridging multiple structures.
 - Provide fire extinguishers for every tent and common area.
 - Place sand buckets for extinguishing lit materials, such as cigarettes, around the site.
 - Identify and provide non-combustible heating sources.
- Designate first aid responders and supply them with ample first aid kits.
- Provide encampment leads with cell phones that are regularly charged and pre-paid.
 - Set shifts for key contacts on site.

⁹ Dying on the Streets – Homeless Deaths in British Columbia https://d3n8a8pro7vhm.cloudfront.net/megaphone/pages/7/attachments/original/1415231881/Dying_on_the_Streets_-_Homeless_Deaths_in_British_Columbia.pdf?1415231881

ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

The GVCEH is deeply grateful to have had the opportunity to facilitate a community-based participatory action engagement in the encampments in Victoria, BC, in 2020-2021; however, this was not a groundbreaking participatory action engagement. Basic human needs are easily understood. Emergency response plans for extreme weather, fires, or other disasters must include a plan on how to ensure basic hygiene, nutrition, first aid, and medical care are deployed to people who are displaced by these events.

“Like Abraham Maslow said, if the basic necessities are shelter, security, warmth
– we have none of those, zero – all of our energy is spent just surviving. Period.”

~Darrin, former resident, Central Park & 940 Caledonia in documentary film 940 Caledonia

Residents from previous encampments, such as Super InTent City¹⁰ at the Provincial Courthouse and Beacon Hill Park/Meegan in Victoria, and Anita Place in Maple Ridge, BC, have shared their experiences of living in encampments and the contrast between that and the experiences of street homelessness or within some of the temporary sheltering locations. Community-based researchers, activists, health providers, legal advocates, and grassroots organizations have documented these experiences to great extent.

We appreciate and hold up these voices.

¹⁰ Super Intent City Society <https://intencity.ca/>

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