

# **City of Greater Sudbury-Community Encampment Response Plan November 2024**

## **Overview**

The City of Greater Sudbury developed a Roadmap to End Homelessness by 2030, which was approved by the Council in May 2024. This is an ambitious plan to reach functional zero, that will require the support of all three levels of government.

In order to address the needs of individuals and families experiencing homelessness, we need to engage, connect and create trusting relationships to truly understand their pathway to housing. For persons living unsheltered in encampments, and often disengaged from housing support services, this can be a challenge. As with many communities across Canada, the City of Greater Sudbury is seeing a rapid and constant increase in the numbers of people living in encampments, therefore the need for this connection is more pressing.

This Community Encampment Response Plan will identify solutions to increase engagement with encampment residents, while ensuring their basic needs are met and they are kept safe from the elements during the harsh winter months in Northern Ontario.

## **Community Context**

This initiative would provide services within the City of Greater Sudbury, which is the largest urban centre in Northern Ontario with a population of 166,004 as per the latest census. In 2023, the annual population estimate provided by Statistics Canada estimated the Greater Sudbury population had grown to 179,965. The City of Greater Sudbury is governed by City Council and Mayor, which provide oversight to the 12 ward areas throughout the community.

In Greater Sudbury, 11% of the population identifies as Indigenous, with the largest proportion identifying as First Nations. Immigration represents 8.2% of the population with 6% as permanent residents and 2.2% as non-permanent residents. 1.5% of the population are veterans.

In comparison to provincial levels, the percentage of individuals in receipt of social assistance in Greater Sudbury is higher than the province, with 6.4% percent of individuals in Greater Sudbury receiving social assistance compared to 4.3%% in the province. For individuals in receipt of social assistance, a greater number of individuals receive income support from the Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) (73%) compared to Ontario Works (27%). As of June 2024, the unemployment rate for Greater Sudbury was 5.7%.

The City of Greater Sudbury has a large geographical area and sees in-migration from

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many neighboring smaller communities and First Nations communities for access to employment, post-secondary education, healthcare and housing.

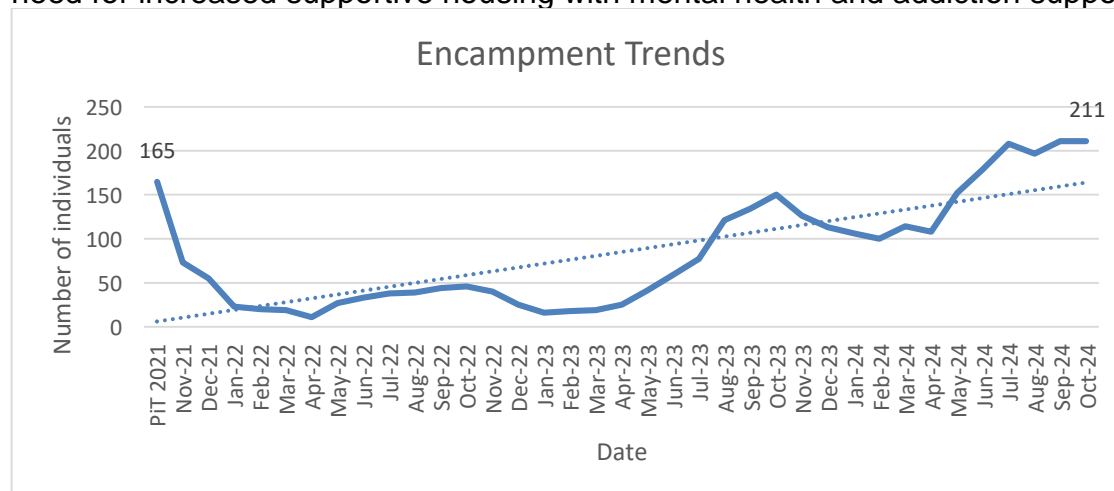
### State of Unsheltered Homelessness and Encampments

The City of Greater Sudbury administers a Coordinated Access System and By Name List of people experiencing homelessness in accordance with requirements from both the Federal and Provincial Government. As well, the City works with community partners to maintain an updated list of encampment locations and both count and identify by name, where possible, the individuals living there. Approximately 56% of the individuals staying in an encampment have consented to have their name added to the By Name List.

As of October 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024, there were 301 individuals actively homeless on the By Name List. This is the largest number that we have seen since implementation in July 2021, and an increase of 22% since November 2023. Of the people on the list, 71 declare they are unsheltered and 118 declare they live in an encampment. Of the individuals on the list, 76% are experiencing chronic homelessness and 75% identify as high acuity requiring multiple supports to obtain housing and stay housed.

As of November 7<sup>th</sup>, 2024, there were 211 individuals known to be staying in an encampment across 42 locations within the City of Greater Sudbury. The number of people staying in encampments within the City has increased by 68% since November 2023.

The graph below illustrates the encampment situation between October 2021 and today. In November 2021, an Encampment response with a number of targeted initiatives was implemented that resulted in a dramatic decrease in people sheltering in encampments between January 2022 and April 2023. Unfortunately, this progress was not sustainable given the lack of deep core and affordable housing, rising private market rents, and the need for increased supportive housing with mental health and addiction supports.



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### **Community Coordination**

The City has a well-developed partnership of 13 community partners from the homelessness serving sector that participates in the Coordinated Access and By Name List process. The Housing First Steering Committee, comprised of leadership from these agencies and supported by the City of Greater Sudbury, provides ongoing planning and management of the Coordinated Access System and HIFIS use in our community. The Community Advisory Board for Reaching Home - Designated Community holds representatives from multiple sectors, including Indigenous organizations, and provides recommendation and oversight for Reaching Home funded projects. The City of Greater Sudbury is both the Community Entity for the Federal Reaching Home funding and the System Service Manager for the Province of Ontario. The City collaborates with, and funds, Indigenous-led organizations on homelessness initiatives and participates in the Indigenous Community Advisory Board. The City partners with the N'swakomok Native Friendship Centre to administer an Indigenous-led Action Research on Chronic Homelessness (ARCH) Project funded through Reaching Home. Through the Roadmap to End Homelessness by 2030 recommendations report, a Lived and Living Experience panel is being developed.

### **Strategies, Systems and Coordination**

In July 2021 the City launched their [Coordinated Access System and By name List](#). The City of Greater Sudbury's Coordinated Access System includes 13 community partners from the Homelessness serving sector including community outreach, Indigenous partners, municipal client navigators, emergency shelters, transitional housing, mental health and addictions, and healthcare. This well developed table collaborates to add individuals experiencing homelessness to the By Name List and supports them to be matched to available housing and supports that meets their level of need.

Through community partners participating in the Coordinated Access System, it has been identified that only 56% of persons living in encampments have been added to the By Name List. To ensure all persons living in encampments are added to the By Name List to access housing opportunities and services, agencies have prioritized progressive engagement with these individuals through continued outreach. Persons living in encampments are added to HIFIS through the Community Outreach Team and the City Client Navigator staff and client information is updated as required. Persons living unsheltered are prioritized for matching to housing supports through the Coordinated Access System.

In November 2022, the [City of Greater Sudbury Encampment Response Plan](#) was approved by Council. The Plan outlines a coordinated response table with clear leadership, that includes By Law enforcement, Greater Sudbury Police Services, Street Outreach providers, Indigenous organizations and Municipal Social Services. The table follows an

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Interdepartmental Municipal Protocol for Engaging and Resolving Encampments. The priority is to assist the homeless population to access safer, sustainable, and healthier alternatives than living outside, not enforcement. The Plan considers several strategies that will support persons living in encampments to access housing.

The encampment response is part of an overall homelessness serving system that includes emergency shelters, drop-ins, transitional housing, supportive housing, diversion and homelessness prevention. We know that many individuals experiencing homelessness will transition between encampments, emergency shelter use and couch surfing during their homeless experience. Through a rights-based, coordinated approach within the homelessness serving sector, we aim to maintain engagement and connection with individuals, supporting their goals and reducing barriers that prevent them from accessing safe affordable housing. Where additional funding will have more opportunity to support housing based solutions, all funds for reaching home will be used in direct alignment with the commitment and recognition for Human Rights.

In May 2024, the City of Greater Sudbury approved a [Roadmap to End Homelessness by 2030 Report](#). This included 26 recommendations focused on the development of deep core, affordable, supportive and transitional housing. As well, recommendations included increased access to 24-hour emergency shelters, development of a Health, Housing and Homelessness leadership table, Indigenous well-being support, and increased mental health and addictions access.

### **Community Outreach and Client Navigators**

The Community Outreach Team is delivered through a partnership of agencies called the Homelessness Network. They provide 16 hours of daytime outreach services, 7 days per week. Funding for this service is from the City through the Provincial Homelessness Partnering Program (HPP). They collaborate with Municipal By law to identify encampment locations and will provide outreach services to persons in encampments and living unsheltered on the street. Along with meeting immediate basic needs they can add people to the By name List and support people who have been matched to a housing program to get to the intake process.

Client Navigators are Municipal staff funded through Provincial Homelessness Partnering Program (HPP). They support people who are experiencing homelessness to navigate the system to housing and be document ready for housing. Activities include addition to the By name List, applying for identification, applying for Ontario Works and other income, completing income tax returns, applying for social housing and accessing homelessness prevention and flex funding that supports housing options.

Both Community Outreach and Client Navigator staff work collaboratively with Municipal By law services to identify encampment locations, connect and engage with individuals living in encampments and support their goals in moving to a permanent housing solutions

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using a human rights based approach.

The homelessness serving sector works collaboratively to support people living in encampments to access supports and services to support them to obtain housing, including addition to the By Name List and being available and open to matching with a housing support that meets their needs. During the winter months, connecting and engaging with persons living in encampments becomes more challenging due to the cold and snowy weather conditions, the increasing poor health of persons living outdoors, the increased substance use and mental health symptoms, and overall disconnection from support services.

This plan provides recommendations for the short-, medium- and long-term responses to creating a system where we meet functional zero homelessness in our community.

### **Objectives and Actions for Unsheltered Homelessness**

The short-term objectives for the Federal encampment funding is to operate additional overnight warming centre locations during the winter months to ensure that those staying in encampments can access a warm safe place during the frigid Northern Ontario winter nights. This will increase the ability to engage with persons living in encampments and add them to the By name List to ensure they are eligible to be matched to housing with supports. Overnight warming centres provide access to warmth, safety, washrooms, nutrition, dry clothing, first aid, and most importantly engagement and connection with knowledgeable housing-focused support staff. Overnight warming centres are a cost-effective way to provide this support to increasing numbers of people when emergency shelters are at full capacity and for those choosing not to access an emergency shelter. The need for additional warming centres within the homelessness system was highlighted in December 2023 when the Health Sciences North declared their emergency department was filled to capacity with individuals experiencing homelessness who were not there to access medical services but to get warm and dry, preventing many others from accessing the emergency medical supports they required.

As part of the City's Encampment Plan, Community Outreach, Indigenous partners and Municipal client navigators use warming centre services to better engage, build rapport, and have housing-focused conversations with people sheltering in encampments. Connecting with people in a safe warm environment has better outcomes than having conversations in cold, wet encampments and will allow timely connections and follow up. The overall wellness of people sheltering in encampments increases when they have regular access to warm, safe, dry and supportive services.

The short term supports provided by overnight warming centres will increase additions to the By name List and therefore provide increased access to available housing with supports, such as Housing First programs and transitional housing. The City of Greater Sudbury has several affordable housing projects in development, including a 40-bed supportive transitional housing program expected to open in the first quarter of 2025. This

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program will provide housing with 16 hours/day wrap around clinical supports for persons experiencing chronic homelessness, with substance use and mental health concerns. Under the recommendations in the Roadmap to End Homelessness, increased investment in affordable and deep core housing development will continue in order to meet the longer-term objectives of addressing the needs of those experiencing homelessness in the community.

With the Encampment funding opportunity provided by Reaching Home, we will be able to fund one additional warming center and expand overnight, morning and weekend hours at another for the winter months during the 2024/25 and 2025/26. These spaces will accommodate 75 persons at a time and will serve up to 150 persons per night.

Long Term Objectives for year three and beyond are that these additional warming center services would no longer be required. With increased housing options as developed through the Roadmap to End Homelessness recommendations, and increased engagement for connecting persons living in encampments with housing options, it is planned that emergency shelters would meet the needs of unhoused persons in the community.

### Energy Court Warming Centre

In September 2024, Council approved the re-purposing of a trailer located at 24 Energy Court, previously used for the Supervised Consumption Site, to operate an overnight warming center for up to 50 people from November 1, 2024, to April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025, with anticipated costs to repurpose the trailer of \$50,000. The capital repairs are complete including removing of interior walls to accommodate 1060 square feet of open space and the addition of a third washroom.

A Request for Proposal for an operator of the warming centre at 24 Energy court was posted and closed on October 2<sup>nd</sup>, 2024. One proposal was received from the Go – Give Project. The proposal was reviewed and approved. The total bid to operate the overnight warming centre from November 1<sup>st</sup>, 2024, to April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025, was \$508,769.07.

The intention will be to operate this warming centre again from November 1, 2025, to April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

### Samaritan Centre Drop In

New Hope Outreach has funding through United Way to operate an afternoon drop-in centre from Monday to Friday from 1:00 pm until 5:00 pm until December 31<sup>st</sup>, 2024, at the Samaritan Center located at 344 Elgin Street. Under a winter encampment response, the City approved funding for extended drop-in operating hours from October 1, 2024, to April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2025, for morning, weekend and overnight hours, with an aim to have almost 24-hour operational supports for an additional cost of \$488,897.

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The increased hours are:

Weekdays 8:30 am – 12:00 noon

Saturday and Sunday 11:30 am to 4:30 pm

Nightly 7:00 pm to 8:00 am

Weekdays (January 1, 2024, to April 30, 2024) 1:00 pm to 5:00 pm.

This program provides access to a safe space, washrooms, computers, internet, and support staff for up to 25 persons at a time. This drop in is co-located with services provided by the Elgin Street Mission and Blue Door Soup Kitchen including access to free meals, washrooms, showers, laundry, community paramedics, and hairdresser services.

The program started the increased hours on October 1<sup>st</sup> and has reported 50 to 70 persons using the services per night. The intention will be to fund expanded hours at this location again from October 1, 2025, to April 30<sup>th</sup>, 2026.

Community Outreach Staff and Client Navigator staff will collaborate with these warming centre locations to offer their services and better connect with people living in encampments during the winter months.

### **Impact and Results**

Project information for all sub projects will be inputted into the Results Reporting Online (RROL) tool.

1.The baseline for outreach capacity is 16 hours per day. The target will be for 24 hour outreach capacity at expanded locations.

2.The baseline is outreach connection at one drop in location afternoons, Monday to Friday. The target is to create new partnership with one organization providing increased outreach access and strengthened partnership with one organization for increased hours of outreach access.

3. The baseline for people experiencing unsheltered homelessness is 71. The target for percentage change is 10% reduction per year.

4. The baseline for the number of people staying in encampments is 211.The target for percentage change is 10% reduction per year.

Our Point in Time Count was completed in October 2024 and baseline and target data will be provided once available.

### **Federally Funded Activities**

The plan includes the development of additional warming centre spaces during the winter

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months to allow community outreach and client navigator staff opportunities to connect with people living in encampments. Federal UHEI funding will be used for the additional warming centre spaces, while funding for Community Outreach and Client Navigator staff is cost matched through Provincial Homelessness Prevention Program dollars.

<b>Activity Name</b>	<b>Expected start and end dates (M/Y)</b>	<b>Cost by year (UHEI funding)</b>	<b>Expected impact</b>	<b>Other funding source(s) and amount (as applicable)</b>
Samaritan Centre warming centre	October 2024- April 2025  October 2025- April 2026	\$488,897	Increased outreach activities  Increased outreach hours  Increased additions to the By name List for individuals living in encampments	
Energy Court Warming Centre	November 2024- April 2025  November 2025- April 2026	\$277,231	Increased outreach activities  Increased outreach hours  Increased additions to the By name List for individuals living in encampments	\$281,539 Municipal homelessness funding

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<b>Year of investment</b>	<b>Funding source (program/initiative)</b>	<b>Amount of funding</b>	<b>Description of investment</b>
2024/25	Provincial Homelessness Prevention Program	\$1.5M	Community Outreach team Client Navigator positions
2025/26	Provincial Homelessness Prevention Program	\$1.5M	Community Outreach team Client Navigator positions

<b>Summary</b>	
Year 1 total	\$1,047,667
Year 2 total	\$997,667
Total over two years	\$2,045,334

<b>Longer-Term Funding</b>	
Year 3 total	n/a
Add rows as needed...	
Total funding	

**Engagement**

The City of Greater Sudbury works collaboratively with the partners within the homelessness services sector, including Indigenous partners, to engage and coordinate services. The Community Advisory Board, Indigenous Community Advisory Board, and Housing First Steering Committee will be informed and engaged in the oversight of this encampment plan and the results.