

City of Greater Sudbury Encampment and Action Plan

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Report Summary

This report and presentation, presented by Iain De Jong, OrgCode Consulting Inc., provides information on an encampment strategy and action plan for the community.

Relationship to the Strategic Plan, Health Impact Assessment and Community Energy & Emissions Plan (CEEP)

This report refers to Council's Strategic Plan in the area of Quality of Life and Place as it aligns with the Population Health Priorities of Indigenous Youth, Mental Health, Housing, and Healthy Streets by reporting on persons who are homeless or at risk of homelessness. This report has no relationship to the Community Energy and Emissions Plan.

Financial Implications

The total cost of this work is \$21,000, comprised of a \$9,000 agreement with OrgCode Consulting Inc. for development and presentation of the Encampment Plan, and continuing support for plan implementation worth \$12,000. Funding for both parts of the work is provided by the Social Services Relief Fund (SSRF).

Background

People have experienced homelessness within the City of Greater Sudbury for many years, including accessing emergency shelters or staying unsheltered in places not designed for human habitation, such as parks, cars, and alleyways. Community agencies servicing the homeless connect with people at these locations to offer services and supports with the goal to return to permanent housing.

During the COVID pandemic the number of people living unsheltered in Sudbury increased. This has been impacted by the closure of in person public services, loss of affordable housing, and the opioid crisis. In particular, the number of people living in encampments in the downtown core has increased significantly. Several attempts to dismantle encampments have largely been unsuccessful. The aim is not just to displace people experiencing homelessness to other locations, but to support people to resolve their homelessness.

Encampment Response Guide

To develop a coordinated, supportive, and successful approach to addressing encampments, staff have engaged with an encampment consultant from OrgCode Consulting Inc., President and CEO Iain Dejong. Orgcode is a world renowned, international consulting firm specializing in homelessness and encampment issues. They have an in-depth understanding of the complexity of encampments and the diverse interests in response and solutions.

To get a ground level understanding of Sudbury's environment, Iain Dejong visited Sudbury in late August/early September and toured the downtown, met with community partners, emergency shelters, community outreach, and people living unsheltered in our community.

Upon examination of the environment and conversations with agencies and those with lived experience, Iain Dejong prepared a document, *Greater Sudbury Encampment Response Guide*, (the Guide) which is a report tailored to the Greater Sudbury community.

The intention of this guide is to assist Greater Sudbury to effectively respond to encampments within the community. This guide speaks to the impacts COVID has had on the homeless and encampments, as well as factors influencing encampments in Greater Sudbury including opioids, demands on existing shelter services, lack of supportive housing, and well-intentioned, voluntary engagement without professional training.

The guide breaks down the mitigation of encampments into three phases:

- 1) Preparation: examines what needs to be done to get ready for an encampment response.
- 2) Mitigation: examines all the services and tasks to be completed when engaging with unsheltered persons living in an encampment.
- 3) Closure: examines enforcement and service offers to assist people when an encampment goes through voluntary or forced closure.

Additional Strategies

In addition to commissioning the development of an encampment response guide, staff have implemented several other strategies over the past several months to improve the success of providing individuals experiencing homelessness with stable permanent housing. These include:

- Development of a Coordinated Access System and By-Name List
- Redeployment of two client navigator staff in Social Services
- Addition of \$150,000 annually in housing allowances to the Housing First program to increase housing options
- Use of local motel for additional shelter capacity
- Implementation of transitional housing program at temporary sites

Next Steps

The Greater Sudbury Encampment Response Guide will be utilized by staff to implement a coordinated, supportive approach to addressing encampments. Council will be provided with updates on the progress of the strategy.

Resources Cited

Greater Sudbury Encampment Response Guide

City of Greater Sudbury Ten-Year Housing and Homelessness Plan update (2019-2023)

<https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=feed&action=file&attachment=27902.pdf>

Emergency Shelter Review and Recommendation

<https://agendasonline.greatersudbury.ca/index.cfm?pg=agenda&action=navigator&id=1351&itemid=15924&lang=en>

Homelessness Consultation Update

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/filestream.ashx?DocumentId=40023>

Homelessness Coordinated Access System

<https://pub-greatersudbury.escribemeetings.com/Meeting.aspx?Id=fddffc38-8409-4c19-8d07-9714999d9ef2&Agenda=Agenda&lang=English&Item=20&Tab=attachments>