

# RESPONDING TO ENCAMPMENTS IN GREATER SUDBURY

A presentation to City Council  
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OrgCode Consulting Inc. are North American leaders in homeless system transformations, leadership development in homeless services, and technical assistance.

OrgCode are merry misfits that disrupt the status quo to be catalysts for better outcomes.

Thought leaders in ending homelessness, we advance ideas, create and share resources, and offer training that doesn't suck.

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# ENCAMPMENT RESPONSE: OVERARCHING PRINCIPLES

**Voluntary closure** of an encampment is preferred to enforcement;

People living in encampments have **strengths and rights** that should be leveraged and respected in the process of engagement, and when necessary, closure.

**All residents of Greater Sudbury should have access to public space**, and no person, business or entity can or should claim public space as private space.

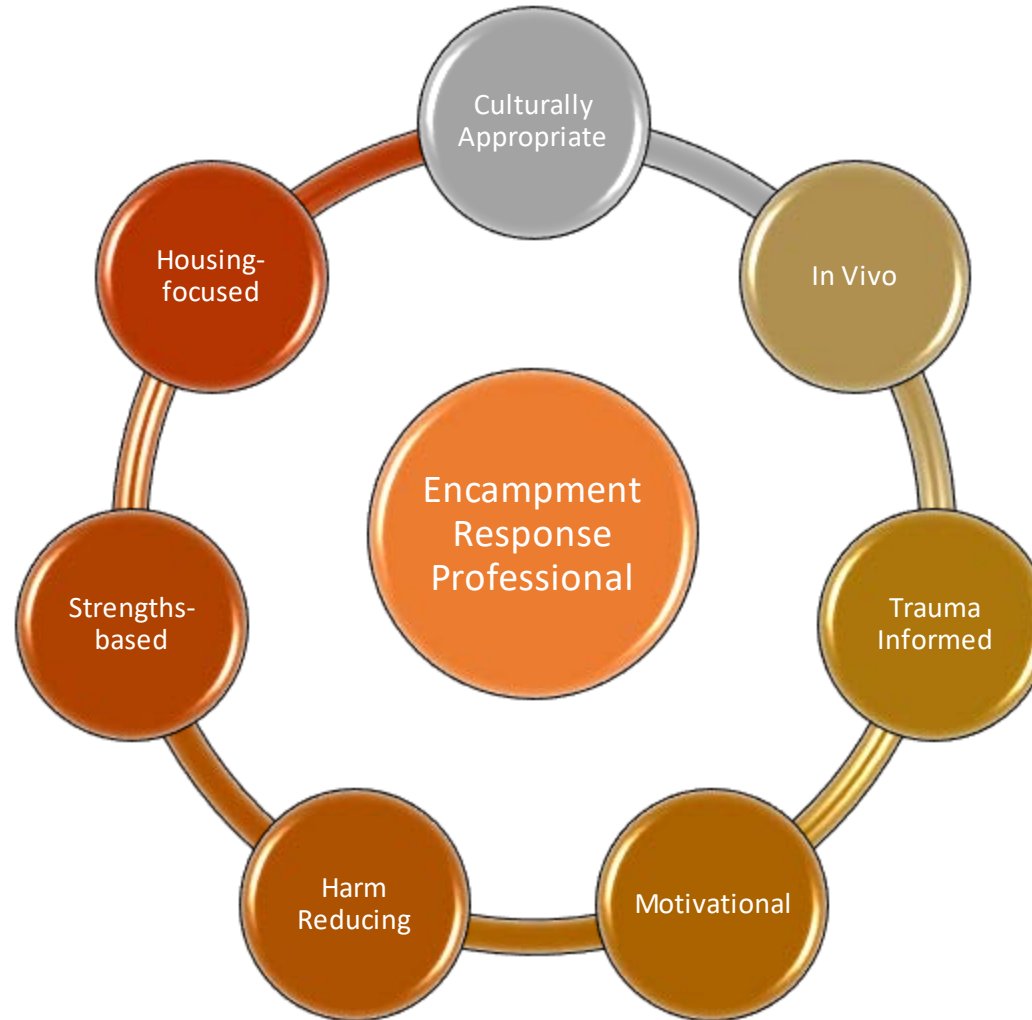


# FACTORS INFLUENCING ENCAMPMENTS IN GREATER SUDBURY

- Scarcity of supportive housing
- A rental market out of reach for many
- Opioids
- COVID
- Trauma
- Insufficient service capacity in smaller communities
- Demands on existing shelter
- Depletion of rooming house stock
- Current & historical approach to addressing encampments
- Demands on street outreach
- Well-intentioned voluntary engagement without professional training



# SERVICE ORIENTATION



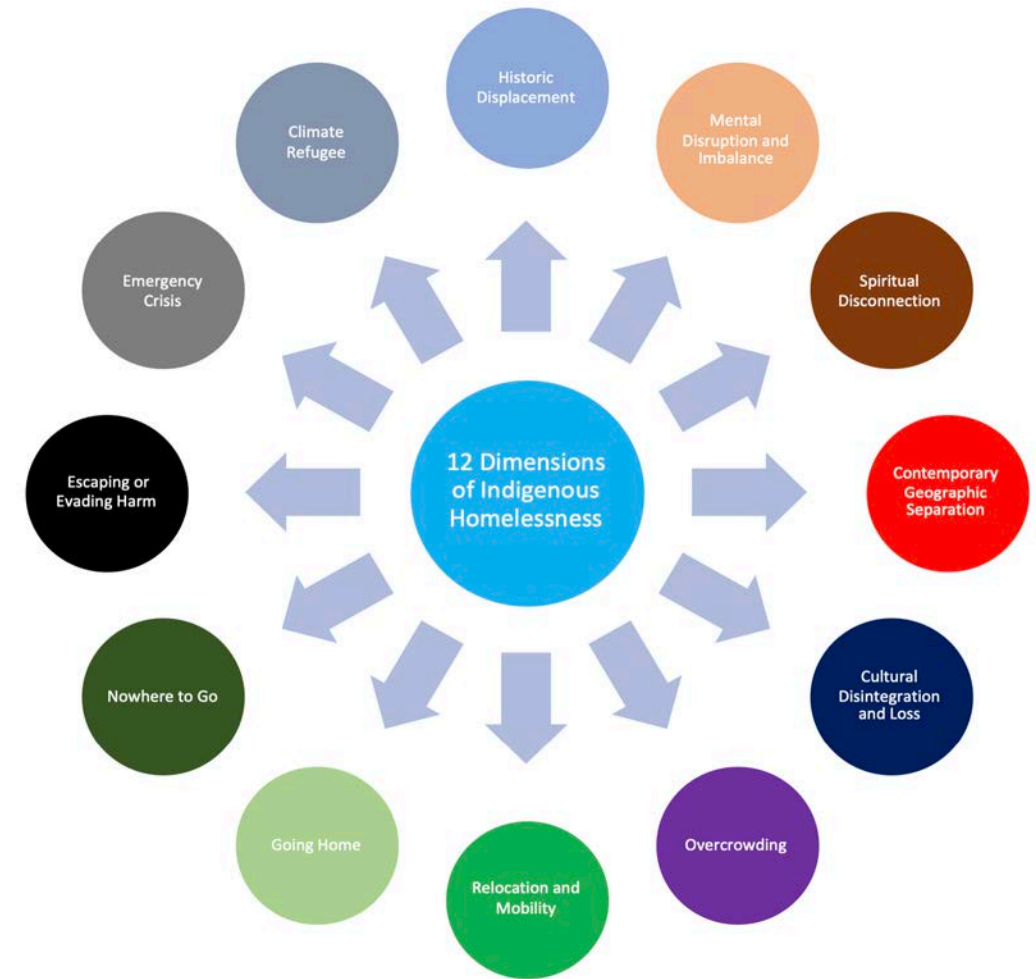
# RIGHTS OF PEOPLE THAT ARE UNSHELTERED

- It is not illegal to be homeless, nor do people suspend their rights if experiencing homelessness
- The Canadian *Charter* applies
- People cannot be forced to accept services
- Reviewing the explicit legal authority of the municipality is important



# CULTURALLY APPROPRIATE RESPONSE

- Responses to homelessness amongst Indigenous people must be culturally appropriate
- Indigenous-led services for Indigenous people can be helpful for providing a holistic response



# THERE ARE NO EFFECTIVE QUICK FIXES

## **Avoid the temptation of:**

- Safe camping zone
- Temporary makeshift spaces like domes, mobile homes
- Thinking tiny homes will solve the situation

## **Remember:**

- People cannot be forced to use a service
- Even if the municipality put in place a safe camping zone or temporary space, there is no way to force people to use it
- If the municipality moves forward with any temporary measure, it will need to have sufficient budget (more costly than housing and supporting people), sufficient staffing, and a wind-down strategy known at the time of implementation



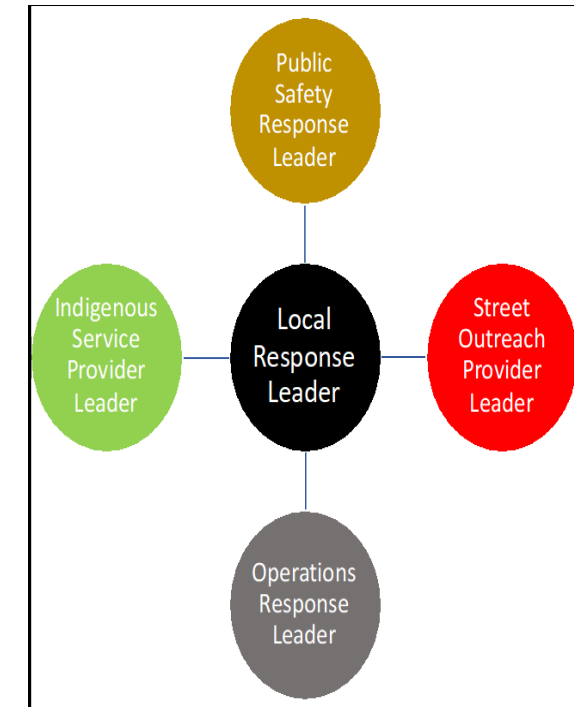


# COORDINATING LEADERSHIP FOR ENCAMPMENT RESPONSE

**LOCAL RESPONSE LEADER:** provided the authority to convene other leaders and interests in the encampment response.

**STREET OUTREACH PROVIDER LEADER:** capable of directing the street outreach team to respond to encampments and perform tasks related to encampment resolution.

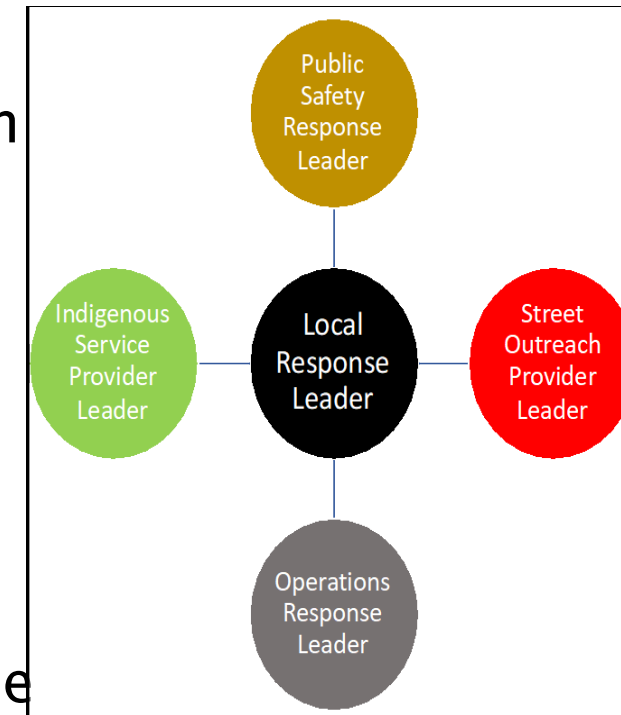
**INDIGENOUS SERVICE PROVIDER LEADER:** provide a cultural perspective on engaging with Indigenous people, help connect Indigenous people in encampments to Indigenous-specific services, and facilitate homelessness resolution pathways for Indigenous people that want an Indigenous-specific response.



# COORDINATING LEADERSHIP FOR ENCAMPMENT RESPONSE

**OPERATIONS RESPONSE LEADER:** well versed on policy, legal authorities of the job, and has the ability to guide or direct operations staff (for example, By-law Officers) on where and when to respond to an encampment, and what to do when/if an encampment is encountered; can instruct municipal staff if the encampments need to be physically disassembled and the site cleaned.

**PUBLIC SAFETY RESPONSE LEADER:** responsible for assessing safety issues associated with the encampment, structures, and/or assembly of people on public space. The position advances public safety for all people; they do not exist to be the enforcement body, nor do they exist to conduct surveillance on people living in encampments.



# INTERDEPARTMENTAL PROTOCOL – OPERATIONAL FRAMING

1. Greater Sudbury, and its funded agencies, **are committed** to working with homeless individuals living outside to respond to their individual needs by assisting them access **services and supports, including permanent housing**.
2. Greater Sudbury will use a **coordinated approach** between City departments, including police and by-law in responding. Activities will also be coordinated with community agencies to access a mix of supports and resources, streamline access to services, and avoid duplication of effort.
3. Greater Sudbury and partners involved in engaging and resolving encampment will engage in **ongoing proactive communication** with homeless individuals, the public, service providers, community agencies and other groups as necessary.
4. **The priority is to assist homeless people access safer, sustainable, and healthier alternatives than living outside, not enforcement.** Enforcement will occur after all support efforts have been attempted without success, provided that the individual has been notified that they are required to vacate a public space. In the event of exceptional circumstances, however, intervention may be required to address immediate public safety concerns.
5. All parties acknowledge that **homeless individuals cannot be forced to accept services and supports.**



# INTERDEPARTMENTAL PROTOCOL

1. The **core leadership group will coordinate efforts** to ensure that the timing of enforcement activities does not conflict with or impede outreach efforts.
2. Enforcement agencies are responsible for **providing notice to individuals** who camping is to be discontinued and that personal goods, debris and structures are to be cleared from the space.
3. Notices will be given to individuals in advance. The **timing of issuing notices will be determined in consultation with outreach staff**. Formal enforcement notices will provide relevant and clear communication to the individual. In addition, site specific information notices for each location will be attached to provide a list of resources to provide individuals with information regarding access to housing, support services and shelter in the area.



# COMMUNITY RESPONSE TABLE

Convened by the Local Response Leader	Addiction Support	Public Health	Municipal Operating Departments
Diverse range of stakeholder interests	Indigenous Organizations	Legal Shelter	Corporate Communications
Coordinating response	Faith-based Organizations	Youth Service Providers	Brain Injury Organization
Group problem solving	By-law	Street Outreach	Mental Health Organization
Increase access to resources and solutions	Fire	BIA	Others
	Ontario Works	Coordinated Access	
	Police	Neighbourhood Associations	



# MITIGATION

- **Common consent** to share information
- **Consolidate all information** about encampments and people in encampments **in one place**
- **Health and safety assessment** of encampments
- **Prioritize the order** of serving people in encampments
- Finalize criteria for:
  - **Planned closure**
  - **Emergency closure**



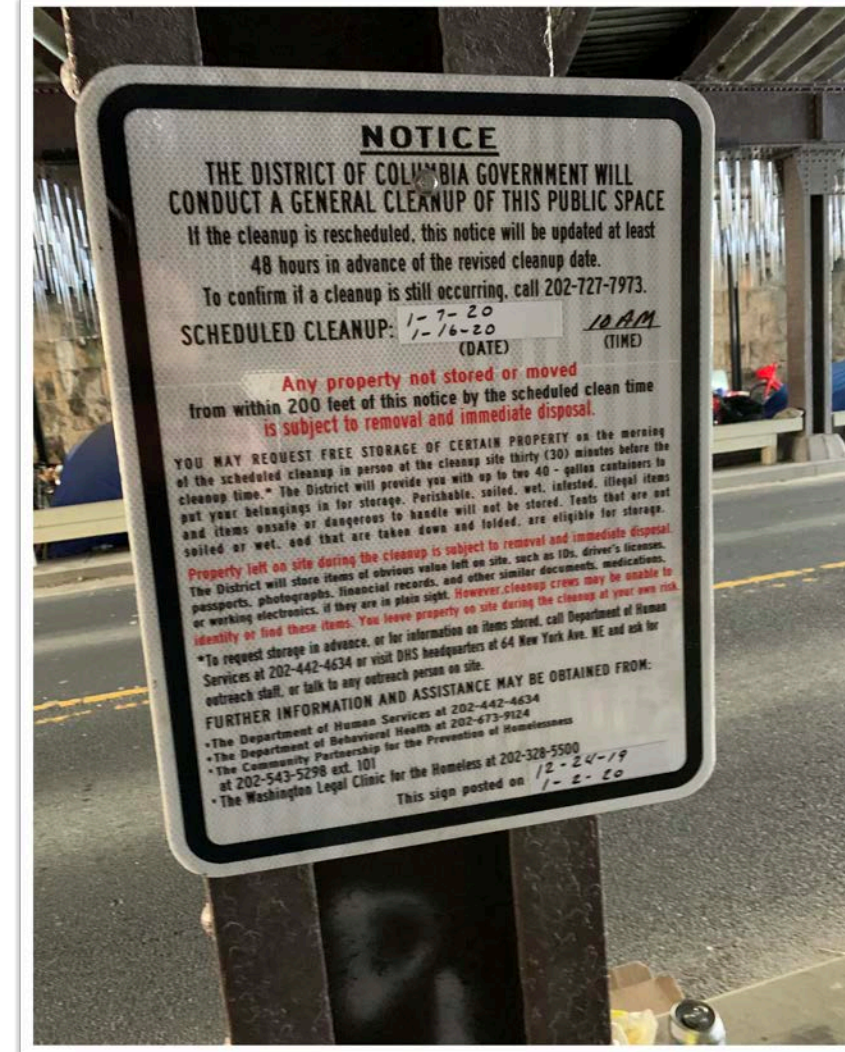
# MITIGATION (CONT'D)

- Intensive **engagement**
- Convene **case conferences**
- Secure **alternate locations** for people
- Secure **safe storage** for belongings
- Engaging the **shelter system**
- **Communications**



# CLOSURE

- Post notice
- Assist people move off site
- Mobilize resources to close the encampment
- Communications





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