



**Quality of Life Standing Committee Meeting  
Additional Information**

**Tuesday, February 10, 2026, 7:00 p.m.  
S.H. Blake Memorial Auditorium**

---

**Pages**

**7. Reports of Administration**

**\*7.2 Declaring a Humanitarian Crisis on Homelessness – Quality of Life Standing Committee** 3 - 8

Report 98-2026 - Growth- Strategy & Engagement requesting endorsement of Standing Committee to recommend that City Council declare homelessness a humanitarian crisis in the City of Thunder Bay. **(Distributed Separately on Friday, February 6, 2026)**

WITH RESPECT to Report 98-2026, we request endorsement of Standing Committee to forward the following recommendation to City Council:

WE RECOMMEND THAT City Council declare homelessness a humanitarian crisis in the City of Thunder Bay, recognizing the urgent risks to life, health, safety, and dignity for people experiencing homelessness; the disproportionate impacts on Indigenous peoples; and the broader implications for community safety and well-being;

AND THAT Administration be authorized to finalize and issue a joint declaration of humanitarian crisis related to homelessness with Anemki Wajiw (Fort William First Nation) and Nishnawbe Aski Nation;

AND THAT Administration report back twice yearly, to the Quality of Life Standing Committee on progress, impacts on community safety and well-being, and outcomes of intergovernmental and partner advocacy;

AND THAT any necessary by-laws be presented to City Council for ratification.

**7.3 Transit Service Adjustments**

**\*7.3.1 Transit Service Adjustments - Deputation Request** 9 - 10

Correspondence received from Fred Caputo - ATU Local 966 Transit Workers on February 6, 2026 requesting to appear

before Standing Committee relative to Report 78-2026 -  
Community Services - Transit Services. **(Distributed  
Separately on Friday, February 6, 2026)**

**\*7.5 Climate Adaptation Update 2025** 11 - 15

Report 43-2026 - Infrastructure & Operations - Engineering summarizing progress to date and identifies future focus areas to inform the renewal of the Climate Adaptation Strategy in 2026–2027, for information only. **(Distributed Separately on Friday, February 6, 2026)**

Jacob Porter, Climate Adaptation Coordinator will provide a presentation.



# **Standing Committee Report**

---

**REPORT NUMBER** 098-2026-Growth-Strategy & Engagement

---

**DATE**

**PREPARED** February 3, 2026

**FILE**

**STANDING**

**COMMITTEE** February 10, 2026

**MEETING DATE**

---

**SUBJECT** Declaring a Humanitarian Crisis on Homelessness – Quality of Life Standing Committee

---

## **PURPOSE**

WITH RESPECT to Report 098-2026, we request endorsement of Standing Committee to forward the following recommendation to City Council:

WE RECOMMEND THAT City Council declare homelessness a humanitarian crisis in the City of Thunder Bay, recognizing the urgent risks to life, health, safety, and dignity for people experiencing homelessness; the disproportionate impacts on Indigenous peoples; and the broader implications for community safety and well-being;

AND THAT Administration be authorized to finalize and issue a joint declaration of humanitarian crisis related to homelessness with Anemki Wajiw (Fort William First Nation) and Nishnawbe Aski Nation;

AND THAT Administration report back twice yearly, to the Quality of Life Standing Committee on progress, impacts on community safety and well-being, and outcomes of intergovernmental and partner advocacy;

AND THAT any necessary by-laws be presented to City Council for ratification.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Homelessness in Thunder Bay is a humanitarian crisis, marked by ongoing human suffering, elevated health and safety risks, insufficient housing and shelter options, disproportionate impacts on Indigenous peoples, and a scale of need that exceeds the capacity of any single organization or order of government.

On February 3, 2026, leadership from Anemki Wajiw (Fort William First Nation), Nishnawbe Aski Nation, and the City of Thunder Bay met to strengthen collaboration in response to the crisis. Leaders acknowledged the ongoing impacts of colonization

leading to a disproportionate impact of homelessness on Indigenous people, recognized gaps in current approaches and available resources, and affirmed that both immediate action and longer-term system change are required.

This report seeks Standing Committee endorsement for City Council to declare homelessness a humanitarian crisis. The declaration is intended to formally recognize the urgency and human impact of homelessness, reinforce collective action, and strengthen coordinated advocacy with provincial and federal governments. It would also provide a unified framework to support practical, outcomes-focused action that improves community safety and well-being for all residents.

## **KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

### **Context**

On February 3, 2026, leadership from Anemki Wajiw (Fort William First Nation), Nishnawbe Aski Nation (NAN), and the City of Thunder Bay met to strengthen dialogue and collaboration in response to the ongoing impacts of the homelessness crisis, including the disproportionate impacts on Indigenous peoples. Leaders acknowledged long-standing systemic conditions – including the ongoing effects of colonization, recognized gaps in current approaches and available resources, and affirmed that no single organization or order of government can resolve this crisis in isolation.

All parties agree that both immediate supports and longer-term system changes are required, and that progress must be grounded in respectful relationships, shared understanding, and tangible outcomes. Unanimously, leaders agreed that the humanitarian crisis related to homelessness is real and requires coordinated action. All parties committed to continuing dialogue and working together to seek the resources and system-level changes needed to close existing gaps.

This local reality reflects broader provincial trends outlined in a report commissioned by the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO), the Ontario Municipal Social Services Association (OMSSA), and Northern Ontario Service Deliverers Association (NOSDA) - [Municipalities Under Pressure One Year Later: An Update on the Human and Financial Cost of Ontario's Homelessness Crisis](#) ([Municipalities Under Pressure](#)).

The report indicates that nearly 85,000 Ontarians experienced homelessness in 2025, representing an increase of approximately 50% since 2021. It is important to note that Northern Ontario is experiencing the fastest growth in homelessness in the province, with known homelessness increasing by more than 37% in a single year and more than doubling since 2021. Northern communities now account for close to 10% of all known homelessness in Ontario, despite representing approximately 5% of the provincial population.

The report identified that Indigenous peoples comprise approximately 40% of the homeless population in Northern Ontario, aligning with local data that similarly demonstrates highly disproportionate representation of Indigenous peoples among those experiencing homelessness. This pattern situates Thunder Bay's experience within a broader northern and provincial context, shaped by longstanding inequities and systems that have not been able to keep pace with the scale and complexity of need.

### **Current Actions and Collective Approach**

Alongside community partners, the City of Thunder Bay and District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) play distinct but complementary roles in responding to homelessness. Important progress has been made locally, and both provincial and federal governments have increasingly come to the table in recent years with program funding and targeted investments. While these contributions have helped stabilize parts of the system and expand capacity, pressures remain.

#### **City of Thunder Bay**

Within its municipal role and capacity, the City continues to advance both immediate and longer-term actions focused on outreach, coordination, land use, safety, and advocacy. Current City-led efforts include:

- Implementing of the 10-Part Enhanced Encampment Response Action Plan, grounded in a human rights-based approach;
- Funding and implementing the Temporary Village to expand system capacity;
- Operating an Encampment Response Team to engage directly with people sheltering outdoors and support connections to services;
- Activating of the City's Severe Weather Response Plan as required;
- Investing \$5.58 million into the Affordable Rental Housing Funding Program, supporting the creation of 168 affordable and deeply affordable units; and
- Developing a Housing Affordability Strategy to support meeting current and future housing needs in a cost-effective, sustainable, and publicly beneficial way by identifying supply/demand gaps and reducing barriers to affordable housing development.

These actions reflect the City's commitment to acting within municipal authority, while recognizing that the scale of need exceeds local capacity. Findings from [Municipalities Under Pressure](#) reinforce that municipalities across Ontario are increasingly required to take on the costs of homelessness through emergency responses, by-law enforcement, public safety measures, and outreach, despite lacking sustainable funding mechanisms to address underlying causes.

#### **District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB)**

The City of Thunder Bay recognizes the significant financial support from the province to help address homelessness. Under the *Ontario Housing Services Act, 2011*,

TBDSSAB is appointed as the Service System Manager for both community housing and homelessness prevention services in the District of Thunder Bay. TBDSSAB's [Impact Highlights: November 2025](#) notes a total allocation of \$58.1 million across these programs. Of this amount, the homelessness prevention-specific annual allocations include:

- \$6.8 million toward transitional and supportive housing capital projects;
- \$3.6 million toward homelessness supports and outreach services; and
- \$2.65 million toward emergency shelter operations.

Additionally, as noted in TBDSSAB's [Board Report 2025-29](#), several provincial funding envelopes have supported the creation of hundreds of units of affordable, transitional, and supportive housing since 2019, with more to come in 2026. These investments reflect TBDSSAB's critical role in stabilizing and strengthening the homelessness service system.

The actions outlined above are not exhaustive; many Indigenous organizations, non-profits, health care providers, and community agencies play a critical role in responding to homelessness, offering innovative work every day to support people experiencing homelessness and increase local capacity.

Despite strong efforts across the local system, homelessness continues to increase in Thunder Bay. This local trend aligns with province-wide pressures identified in the [Municipalities Under Pressure](#) report, including nearly 2,000 encampments across Ontario, chronic homelessness accounting for more than half of known homelessness, and growing housing waitlists. Together, these indicators show that current interventions, though contributing to system stability, are not sufficient to keep pace with increasing demand.

### **Declaring a Humanitarian Crisis**

A humanitarian crisis exists when conditions place human life, health, safety, or dignity at sustained and unacceptable risk. This occurs when existing systems and resources are insufficient to meet basic needs, including safe and adequate shelter. These crises are marked by preventable harm, heightened vulnerability, and the need for coordinated action across multiple sectors and orders of government.

Administration advises that the current state of homelessness in Thunder Bay is a humanitarian crisis based on the following factors:

- Loss of life and elevated health and safety risks to people sheltering outdoors, particularly during periods of extreme weather;
- Persistent gaps between community need and available shelter, housing, and support services;
- Disproportionate impacts on Indigenous peoples, reflecting the ongoing effects of colonization and systemic inequities; and

- A scale and complexity of homelessness that exceeds the capacity of any single organization or order of government to resolve independently.

Declaring homelessness a humanitarian crisis in Thunder Bay would formally recognize these realities and affirm that the situation extends beyond routine service pressures, creating an urgent threat to community safety and well-being. The declaration is intended to:

- Publicly acknowledge the urgency and human impact of homelessness;
- Affirm a shared commitment to collective action;
- Strengthen coordinated advocacy with other orders of government; and
- Support efforts to secure additional resources and system transformation.

While this declaration is an important statement of values and urgency, it must also be understood as part of a broader, coordinated response that requires active participation from all system partners. Its purpose is not symbolic alone, but to provide a unified framework for collaboration, advocacy, and practical action to address immediate risks while advancing longer-term solutions to improve community safety and well-being for the entire community.

### **Next Steps**

While the TBDSSAB was not part of the initial call from Indigenous leadership or the February 3, 2026, meeting, its legislated role as Service System Manager for housing and homelessness services makes it an integral partner in advancing solutions. All parties recognize that meaningful progress requires the full participation of TBDSSAB, and Administration will formally invite and welcome their involvement as this work moves forward.

Administration will bring forward a recommendation for City Council to declare homelessness a humanitarian crisis in Thunder Bay on February 17, 2026. To strengthen collaborative efforts, the recommendation will also seek authorization for Administration to finalize and issue a joint declaration of humanitarian crisis with Anemki Wajiw and Nishnawbe Aski Nation.

In addition, Administration will convene a leadership table with Anemki Wajiw and Nishnawbe Aski Nation, inviting the participation of the TBDSSAB and key community partners, to align priorities, coordinate immediate and long-term responses, advance shared advocacy, and monitor progress.

### ***FINANCIAL IMPLICATION***

There are no financial implications associated with this report. Administration will return to Council seeking direction should the need for financial resources arise.

**BACKGROUND**

February 3, 2026, Political and Administrative leadership met to strengthen dialogue and collaboration in response to the ongoing impacts of the homelessness crisis.

January 29, 2026, His Worship Mayor Ken Boshcoff issued a response letter to Chief Solomon and Grand Chief Fiddler inviting a meeting to discuss next steps.

January 23, 2026, Chief Solomon from Anemki Wajiw (Fort William First Nation) and Grand Chief Fiddler from Nishnawbe Aski Nation issued a letter to the Mayor and City Council calling on the City of Thunder Bay to declare a State of Emergency on Homelessness.

**REFERENCE MATERIAL ATTACHED**

None.

**REPORT PREPARED BY**

Rilee Willianen, Supervisor – Encampment Response – Growth

Kieran McMonagle, Manager – Indigenous Relations – Growth

Louisa Costanzo, Manager – Community Safety & Well-Being - Growth

**REPORT SIGNED AND VERIFIED BY**

Kerri Marshall, Commissioner - Growth

02/06/2026 (MM/DD/YEAR)

Hello,

Please note the following response to Speak to City Council has been submitted at Thursday February 5th 2026 10:46 PM with reference number 2026-02-05-001.

- **What would you like to speak to Council about:**  
Transit Service Adjustments
- **Is this an item scheduled on a current agenda?:**  
Yes
- **If yes, please provide report title or number.**  
Report 78-2026
- **Provide as much information as you can about the matter you would like to speak to:**  
We would like to speak regarding the proposed temporary reduction in transit service.
- **Provide specific actions you would like Council to take:**  
We are asking the Life Standing Committee to not endorse this Report
- **Have you already been in contact with City staff in regards to the subject matter of your deputation request?**  
Yes
- **Who did you speak to in City Administration? What was the outcome?**  
The union was invited to a meeting where HR Erin Anderson Liane Macintosh and Transit management Brad Loroff Matt Furioso Brooklyn Carin and Cameron Heroux presented the report 78-2026 Transit Service Adjustments. The union expressed the concerns and meeting ended.
- **Please select the date of the meeting:**  
Standing Committee - Tuesday, February 10, 2026
- **Please choose**  
Mr
- **First name:**  
Fred
- **Last name:**  
Caputo
- **Email:**  
[fc.atu966@gmail.com](mailto:fc.atu966@gmail.com)

- **Phone:**  
(807) 626-3195
- **Organization you represent: (optional)**  
ATU Local 966 Transit Workers
- **Please note the names of the presenters that will be attending with you:**  
Charlene Klassen James Mazan
- **Please indicate how you intend to participate in the meeting.**  
In Person



# Standing Committee Report

**REPORT NUMBER** 043-2026-Infrastructure & Operations-Engineering

**DATE**

**PREPARED** January 9, 2026

**FILE**

**STANDING**

**COMMITTEE** February 10, 2026

**MEETING DATE**

**SUBJECT** Climate Adaptation Update 2025

## **PURPOSE**

For information only.

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

Climate change presents an increasing risk to the City of Thunder Bay, affecting infrastructure, service delivery, community wellbeing, and regional emergency response. Since adoption of the City's *Climate Adaptation Strategy: Climate-Ready City* in 2015, the City has integrated climate adaptation into core municipal functions, supported by targeted investments and more than \$18 million in external funding.

However, accelerating climate impacts, growing social and equity considerations and an expanded regional emergency response role exceed the scope of the original Strategy. This report summarizes progress to date and identifies future focus areas to inform the renewal of the Climate Adaptation Strategy in 2026–2027.

The renewed Strategy will strengthen resilience, advance equity, and complement climate mitigation actions in *Climate Forward City: Thunder Bay Net-Zero Strategy*.

## **KEY CONSIDERATIONS**

City Council declared a climate emergency on January 13, 2020, recognizing the urgent risks posed by climate change. Since that time, climate impacts have continued to intensify, placing increasing pressure on municipal infrastructure stress, services, public health systems, and finances.

For the City of Thunder Bay, climate change is no longer a future concern but a current operational reality. Greater weather variability and extreme events are shortening asset lifespans, increasing maintenance and renewal costs, disrupting services, and exposing the City to financial risk. Repeated flooding, heat events, reduced winter snowpack, and emerging threats such as Lyme disease demonstrate that historic climate data are no longer sufficient for planning, design, or investment decisions.

Over the past decade, the City has steadily advanced the integration of climate adaptation into policy. As a result, many adaptation actions that were innovative at the time of the 2015 Strategy are now standard practice.

At the same time, climate risks are becoming more complex and unevenly distributed. Climate hazards tend to disproportionately affect vulnerable populations, who often have reduced access to the resources needed to adapt, avoid, or bounce back. Thunder Bay has assumed a growing regional role in responding to climate-driven emergencies, including hosting evacuees displaced by flooding and wildfires across Northwestern Ontario.

While existing governance structures and tools have enabled progress, they were developed under different assumptions about climate risk, data availability, and municipal responsibility. As climate impacts accelerate, limitations have emerged related to social vulnerability assessment, compounding hazards, regional response capacity, and the consistent identification of climate-related financial risk. In response, Administration will renew the Climate Adaptation Strategy in 2026 and 2027, supported by funding from the Federation of Canadian Municipalities.

The following sections summarize progress and identify future focus areas relative to the seven Strategic Directions of the Climate Adaptation Strategy.

**Integrate:** *Integrate climate adaptation into plans, policies, procedures, projects, and investment decisions.*

Climate resilience considerations have been integrated in many municipal actions, reports, and strategies, including the Corporate Strategic Plan, Official Plan, Asset Management Plan, and Emergency Management Strategy. Environmental Stewardship has also been identified as one of five key considerations required within all action items of the Smart Growth Action Plan.

Future focus includes improving consistency in how climate adaptation is applied across departments and strengthen clarity around roles, responsibilities, and decision-making.

**Assess Potential Threats:** *Understand the risks specific to climate change impacts.*

Risk assessment practices have improved since adoption of the 2015 Strategy, including flood mapping by the Lakehead Regional Conservation Authority, municipal stormwater modeling in priority areas, and incorporation of climate risk into asset management processes. These efforts support a more robust understanding of infrastructure vulnerabilities.

Future focus will include updating the climate risk and vulnerability assessment, harmonizing it with the emergency management hazard identification and risk assessment so that we can move forward with common understanding of risks, recognizing the disproportionate impact on equity-deserving groups.

**Increase Resilience:** *Increase resilience of infrastructure and natural landscapes.*

The City continues to invest in resilience through both built and natural infrastructure that manage weather-related impacts while delivering broader environmental benefits.

Since 2015, Thunder Bay has expanded the use of green infrastructure and low impact development for stormwater management, adding additional treatment capacity for an estimated 50,000 m<sup>3</sup> of stormwater annually. Native plant material for these systems are now produced locally in the City's Centennial Botanical Conservatory production greenhouses.

Rebate programs, including the residential drainage rebate and rain garden rebate, delivered through EcoSuperior, support stormwater management on private property.

Urban tree planting has progressed with a focus on species diversity, canopy expansion, preservation of mature trees, and management of Emerald Ash Borer.

Future efforts will build on this progress, while also exploring methods to improve community social resilience, service continuity, and collaborative work with partners.

**Inform and Equip:** *Provide information, tools and training on climate adaptation to facilitate and accelerate action.*

Climate adaptation education and engagement initiatives continue for municipal staff and the broader community. While awareness has increased, understanding of how climate adaptation relates to specific roles and responsibilities remains inconsistent.

Future focus will include improving role-specific training and clarifying how climate adaptation responsibilities align with day-to-day municipal functions.

**Finance:** *Plan for the financing and long-term implementation of adaptive actions.*

Since 2015, the City of Thunder Bay has secured more than \$18 million in grant funding tied to climate adaptation, including infrastructure upgrades, emergency preparedness initiatives, and community resilience projects. The City has also supported grant applications led by community partners, helping to expand local adaptation capacity.

Future focus will include strengthening integration of climate risk into long-term capital and operating budgets and reducing reliance on grant-driven investment alone.

**Network & Collaborate:** *Investigate opportunities to increase the resiliency of the region through networks and strategic collaboration.*

Climate Adaptation has been an ongoing topic of collaboration regionally, nationally, and internationally; connecting with other municipalities, practitioners, and researchers through formal and informal networks.

Additionally, many local adaptation projects have been enabled through community partnerships, including with conservation authorities, academic institutions, Indigenous partners, and emergency management organizations.

Future focus will include strengthening regional coordination, shared data, and collaborative approaches to climate adaptation.

**Respond and Recover:** *Plan for efficient response and recovery to extreme weather events and disasters.*

Emergency management is closely linked to climate adaptation, addressing weather impacts as they occur. Collaborative climate-focused emergency exercises held annually between 2021 and 2024, along with lessons learned in the COVID-19 pandemic response, informed updates to the City's Emergency Management Program.

The City has had a growing role in supporting regional emergencies, hosting on average over 600 evacuees a year since 2016, often limited by local hotel capacity rather than demand. These evacuations are often from communities under threat of climate impacts, including flooding or forest fire.

A local strength for emergency management has included its local partnerships and collaborations to plan for and respond to community needs, including with the Community Support Table and Emergency Food Plan.

Future focus areas include integrating climate change into disaster risk assessments, recognizing our role as a regional hub, addressing the needs of diverse populations, and continued collaboration across all phases of emergency management.

## **BACKGROUND**

In September 2025, Federation of Canadian Municipalities announced funding supporting the City of Thunder Bay's Adaptation Strategy Renewal.

City Council declared a climate emergency on January 13, 2020, recognizing the urgent threat presented by the current and potential impacts of climate change.

Climate Ready City: The City of Thunder Bay Climate Adaptation Strategy approved in December 2015 by City Council.

## **FINANCIAL IMPLICATION**

## Corporate Report 043-2026-Infrastructure & Operations-Engineering

There are no direct financial implications from this report; however, it is estimated that every \$1 spent on adaptation measures can result in \$13-\$15 in total benefits (National Adaptation Strategy of Canada, 2023).

### ***REPORT PREPARED BY***

Jacob Porter, Climate Adaptation Coordinator – Infrastructure and Operations

### ***REPORT SIGNED AND VERIFIED BY***

Kayla Dixon, Commissioner Infrastructure & Operations

February 5, 2026