



**Committee of the Whole Meeting
Agenda**

**Wednesday, May 6, 2026, 6:30 p.m.
S.H. Blake Memorial Auditorium**

Pages

- 1. Special Committee of the Whole in the S.H. Blake Memorial Auditorium (Council Chambers) at 6:30 p.m.**

Chair: Councillor Brian Hamilton

- 2. Land Acknowledgement**

A Member of Council to provide a land acknowledgement.

- 3. Disclosures of Interest**

- 4. Confirmation of Agenda**

WITH RESPECT to the May 6, 2026 Special Committee of the Whole meeting, we recommend that the agenda as printed, including any additional information and new business, be confirmed.

- 5. Presentation**

- 5.1 Update on the Enhanced Encampment Plan**

Director-Strategy & Engagement Cynthia Olsen and Supervisor-Encampment Response Rilee Willianen to provide a PowerPoint presentation.

- 6. Reports of Administration**

- 6.1 Proposed Use of Public Spaces By-law Report**

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Report 039-2026-Growth-Strategy & Engagement recommending that the Use of Public Spaces By-law, which establishes a framework for the responsible and equitable use of public spaces while aligning with the City's human-rights-based approach to encampments, be approved.

Solicitor II Brendan Hardick to provide a PowerPoint presentation.

WITH RESPECT to Report 039-2026-Growth-Strategy & Engagement, we recommend that the *Use of Public Spaces By-law*, which establishes a framework for the responsible and equitable use of public spaces while

aligning with the City's human-rights-based approach to encampments, be approved;

AND THAT By-law 216-2026 be presented to City Council for ratification on May 19, 2026.

6.2 Designated Encampment Sites

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Report 209-2026-Growth-Strategy & Engagement recommending that Site A, Site B and Site F as described in this report be recognized as designated encampment sites.

Supervisor - Encampment Response Rilee Willianen to provide a PowerPoint presentation.

Memorandum from Director of Legislative Services & City Clerk Krista Power dated April 29, 2026 attaching a petition containing 83 signatures, received by the Office of the City Clerk relative to proposed designated encampment sites.

WITH RESPECT to Report 209-2026-Growth-Strategy & Engagement, we recommend that Site A – Current River Park as described in this report be recognized as a designated encampment site, subject to final floodplain mapping to establish final site boundaries;

AND THAT Site B – Freedom Park as described in this report be recognized as a designated encampment site;

AND THAT Site F – Simpson as described in this report be recognized as a designated encampment site;

AND THAT Budget Appropriation 13-2026 be approved to establish and fund the Designated Encampment Fencing capital project in the amount of \$208,500;

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

7. New Business

8. Adjournment

Committee of the Whole Report

REPORT NUMBER 039-2026-Growth-Strategy & Engagement

DATE

PREPARED

March 16, 2026

FILE

MEETING DATE

May 6, 2026

SUBJECT

Proposed Use of Public Spaces By-Law

RECOMMENDATION

WITH RESPECT to Report 039-2026-Growth-Strategy & Engagement, we recommend that the *Use of Public Spaces* By-law, which establishes a framework for the responsible and equitable use of public spaces while aligning with the City’s human-rights-based approach to encampments, be approved;

AND THAT By-law 216-2026 be presented to City Council for ratification on May 19, 2026.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Report introduces and recommends approval of a Use of Public Spaces By-law to guide the responsible and equitable use of municipal public spaces in Thunder Bay. Grounded in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and informed by applicable case law and human rights guidance, the by-law establishes a balanced framework that:

- Recognizes the challenges faced by individuals experiencing homelessness and seeks to reduce harm while supporting access to appropriate services.
- Regulates public spaces to promote safety, accessibility, and equitable use by all community members.
- Aligns with current legal principles, including the requirement that evictions from public space not occur where truly accessible indoor shelter options are unavailable.
- Operates in coordination with existing municipal initiatives, including designated encampments, the Temporary Shelter Village, and the Encampment Response Team.

The by-law delivers on Part 6 of the Council- approved 10- Part Enhanced Encampment Response Plan by establishing clear rules for the use of public spaces and a consistent, support- focused legal framework for encampment response. It also

supports the implementation of designated encampments (Part 5) and guides a structured, human - rights - based approach to encampment relocation and enforcement. Overall, the by-law prioritizes regulation, outreach, and coordination with social supports over punitive measures. By adopting this by-law, the City will strengthen its ability to manage encampments in a lawful, compassionate, and consistent manner, while maintaining public spaces that are safe, welcoming, and accessible to all.

KEY CONSIDERATIONS

Purpose and Guiding Principles

The purpose of this by-law is to regulate the use of municipal public spaces within the jurisdiction of the City of Thunder Bay in a manner that is consistent with the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and informed by human rights principles, to:

- Reduce negative impacts on individuals experiencing homelessness
- Support the protection of persons and property
- Promote the safe and equitable use of public spaces for all community members
- Ensure that any limitations on the use of public space are reasonable, proportionate, and demonstrably justified where Charter rights are engaged

This approach acknowledges the complexities of homelessness and works to maintain public spaces that are accessible, inclusive, and safe.

Legal Context: Case Law on Encampments and Evictions

Recent judicial decisions across Canada have reinforced that municipalities cannot enforce by-laws requiring individuals experiencing homelessness to vacate public spaces without first offering a truly accessible and appropriate indoor alternative. In response to this evolving legal landscape, the proposed by-law has been developed to align with the Charter of Rights and Freedoms and applicable case law. It does not impose an outright prohibition on encampments; rather, it establishes a regulatory framework that permits outdoor sheltering where Charter-protected rights are engaged, while setting reasonable conditions to address health, safety, accessibility, and environmental considerations in a manner consistent with human rights obligations.

Community Health and Safety

The by-law establishes clear, narrowly tailored restrictions intended to protect community health, safety, accessibility, and environmental integrity while minimizing unnecessary interference with Charter rights. These provisions apply to all uses of public spaces and include restrictions related to:

- Damage to public property
- Environmental harm, including impacts on natural features and water systems
- Unsafe or disruptive behaviour

- Dumping or improper disposal of waste
- Unauthorised use of utilities or municipal infrastructure
- Obstructing access to properties, sightlines or City operations
- Fire safety risks and the unsafe storage of materials

These requirements are designed to ensure public spaces remain safe and accessible for all community members, while allowing lawful outdoor sheltering where permitted under the by-law.

Encampment-Specific By-law Sections

While this by-law applies broadly to all users of public spaces, specific provisions address circumstances where individuals are sheltering outdoors in public spaces. These provisions are intended to recognize and permit outdoor sheltering where Charter rights are engaged, and to provide a clear, consistent, and humane framework for managing encampments in accordance with legal and human rights obligations.

Specifically, this by-law will:

1. Provide the ability for City Council to identify designated encampment areas when insufficient accessible indoor shelter spaces are available.
2. Support a coordinated response by integrating with the City's Encampment Response Team and community outreach services.
3. Establish a clear, step-by-step approach to engagement and outreach that prioritizes voluntary compliance, harm reduction, and access to supports before any enforcement measures are pursued.
4. Define regulations for some encampment practices, including fire safety.

This approach prioritizes managing encampments through structured supports rather than displacement.

Designated Encampment Areas

This by-law provides City Council with the authority to designate specific public spaces for outdoor sheltering when there are insufficient truly accessible indoor shelter options available. In these designated areas, individuals experiencing homelessness may set up and reside in temporary shelters, subject to the requirements of the by-law and any site-specific conditions established by Council or Administration.

To support safety, accessibility, and effective site management, the City may impose reasonable conditions including limits on the number of shelters, minimum spacing requirements, and other operational measures. These tools are intended to balance the needs of individuals sheltering outdoors with broader community health, safety, and accessibility considerations.

Encampment Relocation & Enforcement Approach

The City's approach to encampment relocation and enforcement is guided by the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and established human rights principles, including dignity, proportionality, procedural fairness, and harm reduction. Relocation and enforcement are not intended to be punitive and are undertaken only where legally permissible and necessary to address health, safety, accessibility, or environmental concerns.

Where relocation from public space is required, and in the absence of immediate risks to life or safety, the City will prioritize a voluntary, engagement-based approach. This includes outreach by the City's Encampment Response Team to provide information, explore options, and connect individuals with appropriate services and supports, with the goal of supporting informed and dignified transitions.

Prior to any enforcement measures being considered, the City will take reasonable steps to encourage voluntary compliance, including advance notice where practical, communication of applicable by-law requirements, opportunities to address concerns, relocation planning if needed, and offers of support.

If voluntary measures are unsuccessful, a progressive compliance approach may be implemented. This begins with Municipal Enforcement Services operating under the applicable by-law framework and may escalate to the Thunder Bay Police Service only where necessary. Police involvement is not a first-line response and would occur only as a last resort.

Enforcement actions, including the issuance of an Order under the *Use of Public Spaces By-law*, will proceed only where an individual has declined an offer of a truly accessible indoor option. Where such options are not available or do not reasonably meet individual needs, enforcement will not proceed. In these circumstances, the City will continue to pursue voluntary compliance, guided by Council-approved Distance Guidelines and supported by the Encampment Response Team.

All actions will be undertaken with careful consideration for safety and proportionality, with the objective of minimizing harm while supporting access to available services and maintaining safe and accessible public spaces.

Penalties

Penalty provisions are included as a regulatory backstop and are not intended to be a primary tool for addressing encampments involving individuals experiencing homelessness. The by-law includes provisions for penalties, including monetary fines, as a means of addressing non-compliance. It is not the City's intent to issue monetary penalties to individuals experiencing homelessness. The inclusion of monetary fines is intended to address violations by individuals not experiencing homelessness and to

support broader compliance with the By-law. Enforcement actions will be assessed on a case-by-case basis, with consideration given to individual circumstances and the overarching objective of a fair and equitable approach.

CONSULTATION

Consultation Approach

The City undertook a phased and inclusive consultation process to inform the development of the proposed *Use of Public Spaces By-law*, with particular focus on encampment-related provisions. Engagement occurred between late 2025 and early 2026 and was designed to balance lived experiences, service provider expertise, Indigenous leadership perspectives, and broader public input.

Phase One engagement focused on early, targeted discussions with people with lived and living experience of homelessness and encampments, front-line outreach workers, service providers and Indigenous leadership. This preliminary engagement helped shape the foundational approach to encampment-related actions, enforcement principles, and supports.

Phase Two engagement expanded to include a public and lived-experience survey, gathering feedback on high-level draft by-law concepts and identifying areas of alignment, concern, and divergence between respondent groups.

Detailed engagement methods and results are included in Appendix B.

Key Themes Across Engagement

Despite differences in perspectives, several consistent themes emerged across all groups:

- **Safety and Accessibility** – Strong agreement that public spaces must remain safe, accessible, and available for shared community use.
- **Clear and Enforceable Rules** – Broad support for clear standards governing behaviour, encampment location, fire safety, waste management, and protection of public assets.
- **Compassionate, Service-Oriented Approach** – Strong consensus among people with lived experience, service providers, outreach workers and Indigenous leadership that enforcement-related actions should prioritize dignity, safety, and connection to services.

- **Individualized and Flexible Responses** – Consistent feedback that timelines and responses should be guided by risk, weather, health and individual circumstances rather than rigid standards.
- **Coordination and Communication** – Emphasis on clear, respectful, and timely communication, coordinated across City staff and community partners.

Areas of Alignment and Difference

Alignment was strongest on the need for:

- Rules that prevent violence, fire risk, dumping, and obstruction of sidewalks and entrances.
- Managing encampments in unsafe or high-risk locations.
- Early notice and clear communication prior to relocation.
- Involvement of outreach workers and service providers in encampment responses.

Difference in perspective emerged primarily with respect to:

- **Scope of supports during enforcement:**
 - People with lived experience and service providers expressed strong support for relocation assistance, storage, transportation, follow-up, and culturally appropriate supports.
 - Public respondents showed more varied views, with lower overall support for specific supports tied to enforcement actions.
- **Flexibility in timelines:**
 - Strongly supported by lived experience and service-sector respondents.
 - More polarized among members of the general public.
- **Unauthorized utility use:**
 - Mixed views across all groups, reflecting differing perspectives on access to basic services versus formal authorization.

These differences highlight the need for a balanced regulatory framework that is clear and enforceable, while remaining flexible, context-sensitive, and service informed.

How Engagement Informed the Proposed By-law

Input from the consultation directly informed the proposed by-law by:

- Embedding clear principles related to safety, accessibility, and protection of public spaces.
- Supporting a graduated, proportionate enforcement approach, emphasizing voluntary compliance and relocation wherever possible.

- Reinforcing the role of outreach and service coordination as central to encampment-related actions.
- Allowing for flexibility based on risk and individual circumstances, rather than prescriptive timelines.
- Clarifying expectations for communication, notice, and dignity – particularly during relocation or enforcement activities.

Overall, engagement confirmed broad support for moving forward with a by-law that establishes clear standards for public space use, while underscoring the importance of fairness, coordination, cultural safety, and access to supports in implementation.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

There are no direct financial implications associated with this report.

CONCLUSION

The proposed *Use of Public Spaces By-law* represents a compassionate, legally sound, and coordinated approach to managing encampments and public spaces in Thunder Bay. Grounded in the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms and informed by human rights guidance, the by-law provides a clear framework for addressing encampments while balancing the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness with broader community health, safety, and accessibility considerations.

By adopting this by-law, the City will:

- Support compliance with legal and human rights obligations related to encampments and evictions.
- Establish a framework for responsible and equitable use of public spaces that balances individual rights with community needs.
- Integrate public space regulation with existing municipal initiatives to support a coordinated approach that prioritizes engagement and support over enforcement.

Implemented alongside designated encampment areas, the Temporary Shelter Village initiative, and the Encampment Response Team, this by-law strengthens the City's ability to respond to encampments in a consistent, humane, and Charter-compliant manner, while maintaining public spaces that are safe, welcoming and accessible to all.

BACKGROUND

February 17, 2026, Corporate Report 110-2026 from R. Willianen, Supervisor – Encampment Response was presented and City Council approved Guiding Criteria and directed administration to identify potential sites in alignment with the criteria, and to

conduct site specific consultation to inform future recommendation to Council for designated encampments.

February 10, 2026, Corporate Report 047-2026 from R. Willianen, Supervisor – Encampment Response was presented seeking feedback from the Quality of Life Standing Committee on guiding criteria for identifying designated encampment sites and requesting support for proceeding with site identification and the next phase of consultation. The report was referred to Administration to be re-presented at a future City Council meeting.

October 21, 2024, Corporate Report 384-2024 from C. Olsen, Director Strategy & Engagement was represented and recommended that the Human Rights-Based Community Action Plan be approved, and that a copy of the resolution be sent to the Office of the Federal Housing Advocate, and provincial and federal members of parliament.

October 7, 2024, Corporate Report 384-2024 from C. Olsen, Director Strategy & Engagement was presented as a first report and proposed an enhanced encampment response through a ten-part Human Rights-Based Community Action Plan.

August 12, 2024, Corporate Report 312-2024 from R. Willianen, Policy & Research Analyst and C. Olsen, Director Strategy & Engagement was presented and recommended to Council that the encampment distance guidelines for trails, sidewalks, parking lots and bridges remain at 5 metres, and that they be included in the overall Distance Guidelines that were approved and ratified on July 15, 2024.

July 15, 2024, Memorandum dated July 5, 2024, from C. Olsen, Director Strategy & Engagement was presented and proposed amended distance guidelines to include 20 metres away from private non-residential property and 5 metres away from rivers and railway tracks as they were not originally reflected. The final recommendation as presented in the memorandum was approved and ratified.

June 24, 2024, Corporate Report 252-2024 from R. Willianen, Policy & Research Analyst and C. Olsen, Director Strategy & Engagement was presented to Committee of the Whole and provided recommendations related to adopting distance guidelines, and advocacy items to other orders of government related to encampments and unsheltered homelessness.

May 6, 2024, Council directed that the City conduct an environmental scan of municipal approaches to designated and sanctioned sites, undertake an assessment of recommendations to municipalities by the Office of the Federal Housing Advocate, update the Encampment Response Protocol, further define designated encampments for the City, and continue to coordinate a human-rights based encampment response.

April 22, 2024, Corporate Report 137-2024 from C. Olsen, Director – Strategy & Engagement and R. Willianen, Policy & Research Analyst, was presented to Committee

of the Whole and provided an update on the feasibility of designated encampment locations, including community consultation results.

REFERENCE MATERIAL ATTACHED

Attachment A – DRAFT By-Law 216-2026 - Use of Public Spaces

Attachment B – Use of Public Spaces By-Law Engagement Summary Report

REPORT PREPARED BY

Cynthia Olsen – Director, Strategy & Engagement – Growth

Rilee Willianen – Supervisor, Encampment Response - Growth

REPORT SIGNED AND VERIFIED BY

Kerri Marshall, Commissioner - Growth

Date (04/30/2026)



Memorandum

Corporate By-law Number: 216-2026-Growth-Strategy & Engagement

TO: Office of the City Clerk **FILE:**

FROM: Cynthia Olsen, Director – Strategy & Engagement
Growth – Strategy & Engagement

DATE PREPARED: March 23, 2026

SUBJECT: By-law 216-2026 - Use of Public Spaces

MEETING DATE: City Council - May 19, 2026

By-law Description: A By-law to regulate the use of municipal public spaces

Authorization: Report 214-2026 – Growth - Strategy & Engagement – City Council – May 19, 2026.

By-law Explanation: The purpose of this By-law is to authorize the City of Thunder Bay to regulate the use of municipally controlled public space consistent with the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and the City's *Encampment Relocation Protocols*, with the objective of ameliorating the negative impacts on those experiencing homelessness, ensure the protection of persons and property, and to promote safe use and enjoyment of public spaces.

Schedules and Attachments:

Amended/Repealed By-law Number(s):



THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF THUNDER BAY
BY-LAW NUMBER 216-2026

Recitals

1. Section 10 (2) of the *Municipal Act*, 2001, S.O. 2001, c.25, as amended, provides that a municipality may pass by-laws respecting, among other things, the economic, social and environmental well-being of the municipality, the health, safety and well-being of persons, and the protection of persons and property.
2. The City of Thunder Bay is working to address homelessness and housing affordability within the municipality through the development and implementation of the *Human Rights-Based Community Action Plan for Thunder Bay* and the *Temporary Shelter Village Initiative*.
3. The City of Thunder Bay recognizes that by-laws related to use of public spaces must be consistent with the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, and the *City's Encampment Relocation Protocols*.
4. The City of Thunder Bay also recognizes the importance of ensuring that municipally owned public space remains available, accessible, and safe for public purposes.

ACCORDINGLY, THE COUNCIL OF THE CORPORATION OF THE CITY OF THUNDER BAY ENACTS AS FOLLOWS:

1. General
 - 1.1 Short Title: That this By-law may be cited as the "Use of Public Spaces By-law."
 - 1.2 Purpose: The purpose of this By-law is to regulate the use of municipal public spaces within the jurisdiction of the City of Thunder Bay to ameliorate the negative impacts on those experiencing homelessness, to ensure the protection of persons and property, and to promote safe use and enjoyment of public spaces.
 - 1.3 Definitions:
 - a. "Approved Propane Appliance" means any propane fixture, appliance, apparatus or device that consumes or is intended to consume propane as a source of fuel for heat or cooking and is:
 - i) a Canadian Standards Association (CSA) or Underwriters Lab (UL) listed fixture, appliance, apparatus, or device;
 - ii) assembled, installed and operated in accordance with the manufacturer's instructions and in accordance with the

requirements of the *Technical Standards and Safety Act*, 2000 and Ontario Regulation 211/01 Propane Storage and Handling;

- iii) is in safe operating condition and equipped with an on/off valve that it is fully functional and can be easily operated; and
 - iv) not modified or used for anything other than for the purpose recommended by the manufacturer.
- b. “City” means The Corporation of the City of Thunder Bay.
- c. “Designated Encampment Area” means a Public Space or part thereof that the City has recognized, on a temporary basis, for the purpose of authorizing the erection and occupation of Outdoor Shelters.
- d. “Emergency” means in the context of this By-law, an occurrence where the safety and/or well-being of the community, a non-encampment resident, an encampment resident(s), or encampment site(s) reasonably appear to be at immediate risk of experiencing significant harm if an emergency relocation was not to take place.
- e. “Encampment Relocation Task Force” means a group consisting of members of City administration and select community partners appointed by the City to review and provide feedback on relocation plans.
- f. “Encampment Risk Assessment Tool” means criteria designed by the City to assess and prioritize health and safety risks posed by encampments on Public Spaces.
- g. “Noxious Materials” includes tires, plastics, rubber products, drywall, demolition waste, construction waste, paint, animal organic waste, vegetable waste, food waste, biomedical waste, tar, asphalt products, battery boxes, pressure-treated wood, creosote-treated wood, and painted wood, copper, or any material hazardous to human health.
- h. “Officer” means a Municipal Law Enforcement Officer for the City, a police officer, or a special constable.
- i. “Order” means an order to vacate, complete required work or to stop a contravening activity, that is issued under this By-law.
- j. “Outdoor Shelter” means a non-permanent structure with enclosure or overhead protection, such as a tent, designed for non-permanent occupancy and that is capable of being dismantled without tools.
- k. “Public Space” means in the context of this By-law any land under the ownership, lease, management, or jurisdiction of the Corporation of the City of Thunder Bay that is outdoors and accessible to the public.

2. Use of Public Space – Outdoor Shelters, when permitted
 - 2.1 Notwithstanding Section 3.1 of this By-law, a person experiencing homelessness may erect an Outdoor Shelter on Public Space, and occupy, or reside within such an Outdoor Shelter in accordance with this By-law if there are insufficient accessible indoor shelter spaces available in the City of Thunder Bay.
 - 2.2 Nothing in this By-law affects the City's ability to permit or restrict overnight camping for recreational purposes in accordance with *Parks and Open Spaces* By-law 79/2019, as amended.
3. Restrictions on Use of Public Space
 - 3.1 A person shall not carry out any of the following activities in any Public Space:
 - a. erect, construct, or place any permanent or semi-permanent structure for occupation or habitation;
 - b. in any way destroy, damage, foul, injure or impair any feature of the natural environment, real property, or personal property;
 - c. indulge in any riotous, violent, or threatening conduct;
 - d. create a risk to health and safety which interferes with the use of Public Space by other persons.
 - e. dispose of or dump household, yard, or commercial goods, building supplies, waste or refuse, except if deposited into receptacles provided by the City for such purpose and in compliance with applicable laws;
 - f. occupy or erect an Outdoor Shelter having a covered area larger than nine (9 m²) metres squared inclusive of storage for personal belongings;
 - g. make unauthorized use of utilities including, but not limited to, electrical, gas, or water, or obstruct any utility owner from access and use;
 - h. obstruct ingress or egress to any property;
 - i. obscure the sightlines for motorists or pedestrians on any Public Space abutting a highway or right-of-way in a manner that creates a visual impediment and safety risk for those motorists and pedestrians;
 - j. in any way obstruct the City or its employees, contractors, agents and representatives from required access and use of any Public Space;
 - k. burn any Noxious Materials or other materials contrary to law;
 - l. store propane cylinder in an enclosed space, in direct sunlight, or near a heat source;

- m. use any propane fixture, appliance, apparatus or other device that uses propane as a source of fuel other than an Approved Propane Appliance that is monitored by a person capable of safe assembly and use of such appliance and capable of performing the necessary actions to control a fire and prevent unwanted spread; or
- n. use or store any heating, cooking or incineration device, including a gas generator or Approved Propane Appliance, in any manner that creates a risk to health and safety.

4. Designated Encampment Areas

- 4.1 City Council may identify and establish Designated Encampment Areas for Outdoor Shelter use when insufficient accessible indoor shelter spaces are available.
- 4.2 Within a Designated Encampment Area, a person experiencing homelessness may erect, occupy, or reside in an Outdoor Shelter in accordance with this By-law and any conditions established by the City for that Designated Encampment Area.
- 4.3 The City may establish any limits, conditions, or operational requirements that the City considers necessary, including on the number of Outdoor Shelters, and spacing between such shelters, within a Designated Encampment Area to ensure safety, accessibility, and other City objectives.
- 4.4 The City may provide supports within Designated Encampment Areas, including waste receptacles, access points for service providers, and sanitary facilities, subject to available resources.
- 4.5 A Designated Encampment Area may be modified, temporarily closed, or decommissioned where:
 - a. sufficient accessible indoor shelter spaces become available for those sheltering within the Designated Encampment Area;
 - b. site conditions pose a risk to health or safety; or
 - c. environmental or operational factors reasonably require relocation.
- 4.6 Where practicable, the City shall provide reasonable notice to encampment residents before modifying or decommissioning a Designated Encampment Area, except in cases of Emergency.

5. Actions Prior to Remedial Action

- 5.1 Where Outdoor Shelters on Public Spaces do not conform to this By-law, the City may take appropriate action pursuant to Sections 6 (Order to Vacate), 7 (Work Order and Stop Order), and 10 (Penalties and Enforcement).
- 5.2 Prior to taking action pursuant to Section 5.1, the City or its authorized agent shall first:
- a. take into consideration the Encampment Risk Assessment Tool;
 - b. engage with encampment residents to inform them of the need to relocate, or to bring their activities into compliance with this By-law; and if a relocation is required:
 - i. devise a relocation plan in consultation with encampment residents which lays out anticipated timelines, alternative adequate accommodations, the procedure for belongings storage, and supports and services to assist with the relocation;
 - ii. bring the relocation plan to the chair of the Encampment Relocation Task Force for review, discussion, and feedback;
 - iii. bring the relocation plan back to encampment residents for review, discussion, and feedback; and
 - iv. where possible, seek agreement from encampment residents to voluntarily relocate in accordance with the plan.
- 5.3 Any relocation plan shall consider the physical, cognitive, or other ability- related needs of the resident to be relocated and shall provide such accommodations as are reasonably practicable for the City to provide.
- 5.4 Where a relocation plan requires the temporary storage of belongings, said belongings shall be stored by the City for at least 30 days unless unsafe or hazardous. Any items stored by the City may be disposed of following the 30 days without any further notice to the owner.
- 5.5 Section 5.2 does not apply in cases of an Emergency, provided that the City or its authorized agent first:

- a. provides reasonable notice for all affected persons to move their items prior to the emergency relocation;
- b. provide clear and consistent guidelines about the removal, storage, and disposal of property;
- c. provide encampment residents with information on where to access independent legal services;
- d. carry out emergency remedial action with guaranteed due process and administrative fairness;
- e. arrange alternative accommodation(s);
- f. provide an opportunity for genuine consultation with those affected;
- g. clearly communicate information on the proposed emergency relocation;
- h. collaborate with enforcement officials during an emergency relocation;
- i. display proper identification of all persons supporting the emergency relocation;
- j. provide access or referral to any appropriate resources that may be needed.

5.6 The City shall not conduct an emergency relocation under Section 5.5 during extreme weather events, except where there is an imminent and serious risk to life that cannot reasonably be addressed by any other measure, or where the affected person or persons consent to the relocation.

6. Order to Vacate

6.1 Where an Officer has reasonable grounds to believe that a contravention of this By-law has occurred, the Officer may make an Order requiring the person who contravened this By-law to vacate a Public Space.

6.2 An Order under subsection 6.1 of this By-law may include an Order to dismantle or remove any Outdoor Shelter, structure or items placed by the person in Public Space and shall include the time required to comply with the Order.

6.3 Any person who fails to comply with an Order issued under subsection 6.1 of this By-law, is guilty of an offence.

7. Work Order and Stop Order

- 7.1 Where an Officer has reasonable grounds to believe that a contravention of this By-law has occurred, the Officer may make an Order requiring the person who contravened this By-law to do any work or thing to correct the contravention or to discontinue the contravening activity.
- 7.2 An Order under subsection 7.1 of this By-law may require work or remedial action to be done even though the facts which constitute the contravention of this By-law were present before this By-law came into force.
- 7.3 Any person who fails to comply with an Order issued under subsection 7.1 of this By-law, is guilty of an offence.

8. Delivery and Content of Orders

- 8.1 An Order under Sections 6.1 or 7.1 of this By-law may be given, either in writing or verbally, to the person to whom the Order is addressed.
- 8.2 In addition to delivery in accordance with Section 7.1, an Order may be delivered by an Officer placing a placard containing the Order in a conspicuous place near the Outdoor Shelter or where the contravention occurred.
- 8.3 An Order under Sections 6.1 or 7.1 of this By-law shall set out:
- a. reasonable particulars of the contravention adequate to identify the contravention, including the timing of same and the location of the land on which the contravention occurred; and
 - b. the date by which there must be compliance with the Order.
- 8.4 The Officer shall log any Order given, whether it is written, provided verbally, or via a placard.
- 8.5 Where a time frame is set out in an Order for carrying out any action, an Officer may extend the time for compliance beyond the established time frame provided such extension is acceptable to the Officer.

9. City Carrying Out Work and Obstruction Prohibited

- 9.1 The City or any person acting on its behalf is not liable to compensate any person by reason of anything done by or on behalf of the City in the reasonable exercise of its powers under any provisions of this By-Law
- 9.2 No person, shall impede, interfere, or obstruct an Officer in the execution of their duties and the inspection of property required under this By-law, by doing any act or refusing an Officer direction.
- 9.3 No person shall obstruct an Officer by providing any false or misleading information.

9.4 It is an offence for any person to physically obstruct an Officer in the discharge of their duties.

10. Penalties and Enforcement

10.1 The City may remediate any contraventions of this By-law, including as permitted pursuant to s. 446 of the *Municipal Act*, as amended.

10.2 In the event the City adopts an Administrative Monetary Penalty System By-law this By-law may be enforced via the issuance of a penalty notice in accordance with the Administrative Monetary Penalty System By-law.

10.3 Every person who contravenes any provision of this By-Law is guilty of an offence and upon conviction is liable to a fine or penalty as provided for in the *Provincial Offences Act* but no person shall be convicted of an offence for which a penalty notice has been issued under an Administrative Monetary Penalty System By-law.

10.4 In addition to any penalty imposed upon conviction for an offence under this By-law, any court of competent jurisdiction may make an order prohibiting the continuation or repetition of any contravention of any provision of this by-law.

10.5 For greater certainty, all violations of this By-law are continuing offences for each day a person continues to be in violation of any provision of this By-law.

10.6 The remedies set out in this By-law are alternatives to each other and the failure of the City to take any step or avail itself of any particular remedy does not prevent it from availing itself of any other remedy under this By-law or applicable law.

11. Exemptions and Primacy

11.1 Nothing in this By-law shall affect:

- a. Any right or duty of the City with respect to any highway, laneway or right-of-way.
- b. The application and enforcement of any obligations under any lease of land from or by the City.

11.2 In the event that this By-law conflicts with any other by-law of the City, the provisions of this By-law shall prevail.

12. Severability

12.1 Should any provision of this By-law be declared invalid by a court of competent jurisdiction, the same shall not affect the validity of the By-law as a whole or any part thereof, other than the part which was declared to be invalid.

13. Commencement

13.1 This By-law shall come into force and take effect on the day that it is enacted by City Council.

Enacted and passed this 19th day of May, A.D. 2026 as witnessed by the Seal of the Corporation and the hands of its proper Officers.

Andrew Foulds
Speaker

Krista Power
City Clerk

DRAFT

Proposed Use of Public Spaces Engagement Summary Report

Introduction

This appendix documents the consultation undertaken by the City to inform the development of the proposed *Use of Public Spaces By-law*, with a particular focus on encampment-related considerations. The engagement approach was designed to gather perspectives from those most directly affected, those providing services and supports, Indigenous leadership, and the broader community.

The appendix presents detailed findings from Phase One targeted engagement and Phase Two survey-based consultation. While the results are not intended to represent statistically significant sampling, they provide valuable insight into priorities, concerns, and lived realities that shaped the proposed regulatory approach.

A high-level synthesis of this input, including key themes, areas of alignment and difference, and how feedback informed the proposed by-law, is provided in the main report. This appendix is included to provide additional detail and ensure transparency in the City's engagement process.

Phase One Consultation – 2025

Phase One engagement focused on early, targeted consultation to inform the foundational approach to the proposed *Use of Public Spaces By-law*, particularly as it relates to encampment actions and enforcement principles. The intent of this phase was to gather practical, lived, and service-sector perspectives to help shape early policy direction prior to broader public consultation.

In late 2025, the City engaged with organizations providing direct services to people living in encampments, Indigenous representative organizations, front-line outreach workers, and people with lived and living experience of homelessness. These discussions were exploratory in nature and emphasized understanding on-the-ground realities, safety considerations, communication needs, and appropriate supports.

Input from Phase One directly informed the development of the draft by-law concepts advanced to Phase Two consultation and is described in more detail below.

People with Lived Experience Preliminary Engagement

The City engaged directly with approximately 50 people with lived and living experience of homelessness and encampments, facilitated by the City's Encampment Response Team. Outreach was conducted in person through existing connections, including engagement while riding the Care Bus, allowing participation that was accessible and grounded in lived experience.

This preliminary engagement was intended to gather insight into how proposed public space rules and enforcement processes may be experienced on the ground, and what conditions are perceived as reasonable, safe, or harmful by those most directly affected. Not all survey questions were mandatory, and as a result the themes and percentages presented below reflect the views of respondents who answered each specific question, rather than all individuals engaged. The following key themes emerged from this input:

- **Notice and Enforcement Timelines**
Just over half of the respondents (approximately 52%) indicated that notice should be determined on a case-by-case basis, rather than standardized (approximately 26%). Feedback on specific timeframes commonly ranged from 24 hours to one week.
- **Support During a Notice or Enforcement**
Most respondents identified Outreach Workers (62%) and the Encampment Response Team (52%) as preferred supports to be present during an encampment notice or action. Fewer respondents indicated other supports such as a trusted agency (40%), peer support (26%) or nurse (24%) would be desired.
- **Support Needed During Relocation**
Having a safe place to move to (67%), time to pack (56%), clear communication (54%) and a ride to another location (54%) were among the top ranked responses to feeling supported during a relocation.
- **Trauma Informed & Respectful Engagement**
Respondents indicated that calmness (67%), respect (62%), and not being rushed (51%) as the top three terms that would describe trauma-informed care. Further, respondents identified outreach workers (59%), the encampment response team (46%), and putting up posters/signs (54%) as their preferred method for receiving updates.

Front-line Outreach Worker Preliminary Engagement

An online survey was used to engage 15 front-line outreach workers, primarily through the Outreach Workers' Network. Their input reflects direct, day-to-day experience working with people living in encampments and provides practical insight into safety concerns, site conditions, and service needs. The following themes emerged from this input:

- **Service Provider Notification**
There was no clear preference for when services providers wished to be informed of potential or imminent enforcement or closure of an encampment. Results ranged from immediately, when risk is increasing, at the first serious safety incident, when residents are given written notice, and only when enforcement is likely.
- **Involvement During Priority Responses**
Service providers unanimously (100%) indicated that the City's Encampment Response Team and front-line workers with established relationships with encampment residents should be involved in the response to support people.

- **Encampment Action Approach**

Most respondents (67%) indicated that a standard approach with flexibility based on risk is applied to all encampment actions. Further, all (100%) respondents indicated that clear, calm communication is critical during encampment actions.

- **Supports During Relocation**

It was unanimously agreed (100%) that having a safe place to relocate was important. And there was high support for access to health/medication, transportation, access to food/water, follow-up after relocation, access to harm reduction supplies, having a support worker present, access to cultural supports and potential storage for personal belongings.

Service Provider and Indigenous Leadership Preliminary Engagement

In December 2025, City staff convened a full-day, in-person facilitated session with representatives from 18 community organizations, including director-level participation from Indigenous leadership and agencies providing direct services to people living in encampments. The session was structured in two parts: a review of early identified potential designated encampment sites, and a discussion of early concepts for the proposed Use of Public Spaces By-law, including encampment-related actions and enforcement processes.

The following key themes emerged from the discussion related to encampment actions and enforcement:

- **Early Notification and Coordination**

Emphasis on early identification of encampments requiring relocation and proactive, coordinated planning with service providers. Timely information sharing was identified as critical to assessing risks, identifying supports, and preventing escalation.

- **Individualized, Needs-Based Approach**

Strong consensus that decisions should be guided by individualized risk and needs assessments, rather than standardized or prescriptive timelines.

- **Prioritization of Voluntary Approaches**

Engagement and voluntary relocation were consistently identified as the preferred approach, supported by trusted relationships, clear communication, and access to appropriate services.

- **Proportionate, Last-Resort Enforcement**

Enforcement should only be considered where health or safety risks cannot be mitigated, and must be trauma-informed, culturally safe, and proportionate. Non-uniformed, non-police involvement was strongly preferred, with escalation only where necessary.

- **Clear and Respectful Communication**

The importance of face-to-face, plain-language communication delivered by individuals with established rapport was emphasized, with a focus on maintaining dignity, transparency, and choice.

- **Practical Supports for Relocation**
The need for supports such as transportation, belongings storage, access to health care and harm reduction services, cultural and spiritual supports, and accommodation for pets and partners was highlighted. Participants noted the complexity of these supports and the need for adequate resourcing.
- **Systems Coordination and Continuous Improvement**
The importance of clear roles, protocols, and a coordinated systems approach was emphasized, including defined stages of response, risk assessment tools, communication templates, debrief processes, and information-sharing mechanisms that respect confidentiality.

Overall, participants reinforced that a coordinated, compassionate, and service-driven approach is essential to supporting effective encampment relocations.

Phase Two Consultation – 2026

Building on the foundational input gathered through Phase One engagement, Phase Two consultation focused on testing high-level draft provisions of the proposed by-law and gathering feedback from people with lived experience and the broader public. While the results do not represent a statistically significant sample of the broader population, they provide valuable insight into priorities, concerns, and areas of alignment and difference among respondents.

The survey was available from March 2 to March 15, 2026. It was administered online through the City's Get Involved platform, with paper copies available at City Hall and all four branches of the Thunder Bay Public Library.

In parallel, a paper-based survey was conducted with people with lived experience of homelessness and administered in person by the City's Encampment Response Team to support informed and accessible participation. Initial efforts to engage individuals directly at encampment locations during daytime hours were adapted to better reflect on-the-ground realities. To maximize participation, surveys were conducted at homeless service organizations, including the Salvation Army and Dew Drop Inn on the north side, PACE, Grace Place, and Shelter House on the south side.

People with Lived Experience - Survey Results

A total of 93 surveys were completed by people with lived experience. Among respondents, 69% reported direct experience living in an encampment, and 57% identified as Indigenous, underscoring both the relevance of the feedback and the importance of culturally informed approaches.

Overall, responses demonstrated strong alignment with principles of shared responsibility, safety, and respectful use of public spaces:

- 97% indicated it is important to protect public spaces from damage

Appendix B – R039-2026 Proposed Use of Public Spaces By-law
Engagement Summary Report

- 96% agreed that activities should not create health or safety risks for others
- 100% supported proper disposal of garbage and waste
- 88%–89% supported maintaining accessibility, including not blocking sidewalks, roads, or visibility

There was similarly strong support for clear and consistent rules governing public spaces:

- 100% supported prohibiting violent or threatening behaviour and preventing dumping
- 85% supported rules regarding permitted types of temporary shelters
- 86% supported limits on storing large amounts of materials
- 91% supported measures to reduce fire and heating risks
- Views were more mixed on prohibiting unauthorized utility use (53% support), reflecting differing perspectives on access to basic services

Respondents also expressed broad support for managing the scale and location of encampments:

- 96% supported preventing blockages of sidewalks, trails, and entrances
- 90% supported restrictions in unsafe or high-risk areas
- 94% supported minimum distances from sensitive land uses
- 87% supported limits on the space occupied by tents and belongings
- 71% supported limits on the number of tents in a single area

With respect to encampment relocation and enforcement processes, there was strong and consistent support for a compassionate, coordinated, and service-oriented approach:

- 95% supported advance notice prior to relocation
- 89% supported clear written communication
- 99% supported connection to outreach and services
- 96% supported consideration of individual needs
- 86%–89% supported assistance with storage and moving belongings
- 95% supported transportation assistance where needed
- 95% supported follow-up after relocation
- 97% supported coordination with service providers in advance
- 93% supported flexible timelines based on individual circumstances (e.g., weather, health)

Overall, 90% of respondents supported or somewhat supported moving forward with a by-law to establish rules for the use of City public spaces. Taken together, the results indicate that people with lived experience broadly support clear and enforceable rules when paired with fairness, flexibility, safety, and access to services, and when implemented in a way that respects dignity and individual circumstances.

Summary of Open Feedback - People with Lived Experience

Written input from people with lived experience focused less on specific by-law provisions and more on sharing lived realities of encampments, including safety, access to basic needs, service gaps, and interactions with outreach supports. This feedback provides important contextual insight into how public space rules may intersect with on-the-ground experiences.

There was a strong emphasis on safety, dignity, and access to basic necessities in encampments. Participants identified safety and security – both personal and public – as a priority, including interest in consistent, 24-hour safety presence to prevent conflicts and ensure shared use of spaces.

Access to basic amenities was a dominant theme. Respondents emphasized the need for reliable access to washrooms, water, electricity, lighting, sleeping supplies, and improved-quality tents, as well as extended service hours and more indoor options during non-winter months. Cleanliness and hygiene were also identified as critical, with calls for regular garbage and recycling services and maintaining encampments in a respectful, orderly condition.

Participants expressed support for existing outreach efforts, including the City’s Encampment Response Team and mobile services such as the Care Bus and SOS, and suggested expanding these services. There were repeated requests for more addiction and health supports, delivered in a non-judgmental manner, and for culturally appropriate services, including Indigenous-led healing practices.

Additional feedback underscored the importance of respect for individuals, surrounding areas, and the broader community. The need for better coordination with housing and social service partners was also mentioned. Participants noted the value of meaningful engagement, suggesting improved consultation tools and opportunities for positive, community-building activities.

General Public - Survey Results

A total of 163 responses were received through the public survey. Overall, results indicate strong support for clear rules governing the use of City public spaces, with a particular emphasis on safety, accessibility, and protection of public assets.

Respondents demonstrated high levels of agreement with core principles related to responsible use of public spaces:

- 94% identified it as important to protect public spaces from damage
- 96% agreed activities should not create health or safety risks
- 98% supported proper disposal of garbage and waste
- 92%–93% supported maintaining accessibility, including not blocking roads, sidewalks, or visibility

There was similarly strong support for clear and enforceable rules:

- 96% supported prohibiting violent or threatening behaviour
- 98% supported rules to prevent dumping
- 90% supported clear rules for permitted types of temporary shelters
- 92% supported limits on storing large amounts of materials or belongings
- 79% supported prohibiting unauthorized use of water or electricity

Respondents also expressed strong support for measures to reduce risks and manage encampment impacts:

- 90% supported rules to reduce fire and heating risks
- 94% supported preventing encampments from blocking sidewalks, trails, entrances, or alleyways

Support remained generally high, though slightly lower, for measures related to encampment size and density:

- 82% supported limits on the number of tents in a single area
- 81% supported limits on the space occupied by tents and belongings

Location-based restrictions were more consistently supported:

- 89% supported minimum distances from sensitive land uses
- 88% supported restrictions in unsafe or high-risk areas

In contrast, views were more mixed regarding enforcement-related relocation processes and associated supports:

- 68% supported connection to outreach or services
- 63% supported advance notice
- Lower levels of support were observed for:
 - Clear written communication (48%)
 - Coordination with service providers (53%)
 - Consideration of individual needs (43%)
 - Transportation assistance (47%)
 - Follow-up supports (45%)
 - Assistance moving belongings (38%)
 - Storage of belongings (23%)
- 15% indicated that none of the listed measures should be required
- A small number of respondents (11%) selected “other” and reflected a wide range of perspectives, including calls for immediate enforcement and removal, expectations for personal responsibility, concerns about neighbourhood safety, as well as perspectives emphasizing compassion, cultural and peer supports, and minimizing harm.

Views were also divided regarding flexibility in relocation timelines:

- 43% supported flexible timelines based on circumstances (e.g., weather, health)
- 42% disagreed
- 15% were unsure

Overall, 85% of respondents supported or somewhat supported moving forward with a by-law to establish rules for the use of City public spaces. Taken together, the results indicate broad public support for clear, enforceable standards that prioritize safety, accessibility, and protection of public spaces, alongside more varied perspectives on the scope and nature of supports associated with enforcement actions.

Summary of Open Feedback - Public Survey

Written comments from the public reflected strong interest in ensuring that municipal public spaces remain safe, clean, accessible, and available for shared community use. Many respondents emphasized that public parks, trails, waterfront areas, and green spaces are intended for recreation and gathering, and expressed concern that the presence of encampments has, in some locations, reduced public access or created safety, sanitation, and environmental risk concerns – particularly for children, seniors, families, and nearby residents.

A recurring theme was the need for clear, consistent, and enforceable rules. Many respondents expressed frustration with what they perceive as insufficient enforcement of existing by-laws and stressed that new rules must be practical, well-communicated, and supported by adequate enforcement capacity. There was strong support for consistent application of rules to all users of public spaces, alongside expectations for accountability and consequences where rules are not followed.

Encampment location was a prominent issue. Many comments opposed encampments in parks, playgrounds, trails, waterfronts, residential areas, and other high-use or sensitive locations, and expressed support for limiting encampments to designated areas or prohibiting them in public spaces altogether. Environmental impacts, including garbage, human waste, and fire risks, were frequently cited, along with calls for improved sanitation infrastructure, waste management, lighting, and fire-safety measures where encampments in public spaces are permitted.

While views on enforcement and relocation varied, several respondents emphasized that any enforcement-related actions should be realistic, adequately resourced, and clearly defined. At the same time, many comments acknowledged that encampments reflect broader housing and social service gaps, and noted that sustainable solutions require coordination with housing, mental health, addictions, and outreach services. Overall, public input highlighted a desire for a balanced approach that protects public safety, access, and environmental integrity, while addressing homelessness through clear rules, effective enforcement, and complementary investments in services and housing.

Committee of the Whole Report

REPORT NUMBER 209-2026-Growth-Strategy & Engagement

DATE

PREPARED

March 16, 2026

FILE

MEETING DATE

May 6, 2026

SUBJECT

Designated Encampment Sites – Special Committee of the Whole

RECOMMENDATION

WITH RESPECT to Report 209-2026-Growth-Strategy & Engagement, we recommend that Site A – Current River Park as described in this report be recognized as a designated encampment site, subject to final floodplain mapping to establish final site boundaries;

AND THAT Site B – Freedom Park as described in this report be recognized as a designated encampment site;

AND THAT Site F – Simpson as described in this report be recognized as a designated encampment site;

AND THAT Budget Appropriation 13-2026 be approved to establish and fund the Designated Encampment Fencing capital project in the amount of \$208,500;

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

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This report advances Part 5 of the Council-approved 10 Part Enhanced Encampment Response Plan, which directs the selection and implementation of designated encampment sites. The report recommends three sites – Current River Park, Freedom Park, and Simpson – as designated encampments (see Attachment A for preliminary site boundaries).

Designated encampment sites are a temporary, managed response to outdoor sheltering. They are not a replacement for housing. Their purpose is to improve outcomes, coordinate services, and better manage the use of public spaces while longer-term housing solutions continue to advance in the community.

Council-approved Distance Guidelines and Guiding Criteria informed the identification and evaluation of potential locations, supported by a broader scan of more than 1,200 municipally owned properties. Seventy-five sites were advanced for further analysis, and six sites were advanced for technical analysis and multi-stakeholder consultation.

The recommended sites have the strongest overall alignment with the Council-approved criteria, particularly in relation to service access, operational feasibility, and existing encampment activity. Site-specific considerations have been identified and can be managed through design measures (e.g., fencing, defined layouts), operational controls (e.g., monitoring, maintenance), and coordinated service delivery.

The recommendations have been informed by prior consultation on designated and sanctioned encampments, and a recent robust two-phase multi-stakeholder consultation process. Perspectives varied, with stronger support generally observed for sites with existing encampment activity and service access, and more concern raised for sites near sensitive uses or with possible community impacts.

DISCUSSION

Identifying designated encampment sites advances work under the City's Enhanced Encampment Response Plan (10-Part Plan), approved by Council in October 2024. This report responds to *Part 5 – Identify options for designated encampment locations within Urban Cores* of the 10-Part Plan.

This report focuses on the identification and evaluation of potential locations, and the selection of three recommended sites that best align with Council-approved tools, technical analysis, and multi-stakeholder consultation.

Site Identification & Evaluation

The City's Distance Guidelines (Attachment B) and Guiding Criteria (Attachment C) were first applied to properties with known encampment activity. Six sites with the strongest overall alignment were identified as potential options (Attachment D). All sites generally meet the Distance Guidelines, though not all fully satisfy the Guiding Criteria.

The six potential sites were further evaluated with input from City divisions and staff from statutory local boards, including the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority (LRCA) and Thunder Bay Police Service (TBPS). Feedback is summarized at a high level.

Sites that meet most or all the criteria may still present operational and safety considerations. Identified considerations have been assessed in context, with a focus on the City's ability to mitigate risks through design, operational controls, and ongoing site management.

In parallel to technical analyses, the sites were also advanced for multi-stakeholder consultation. High-level results are summarized for each site, with further findings provided later in this report, and in greater detail in *Attachment E – Designated Encampment Sites Consultation Findings*.

A two-step review of over 1,200 municipally owned properties was also completed. Properties were screened out if they were smaller than 0.9 acres; required significant site preparation; were rural or semi-rural; were within 500 m of the Temporary Village; were subject to grant-funded development, existing agreements, or active negotiations; or were identified as Opportunity Sites or prime industrial lands.

This yielded 75 properties that were subject to further screening using the Distance Guidelines and Guiding Criteria (see Attachment F). None were determined to have sufficient alignment to be advanced for consultation. These properties have not undergone the same level of technical review and would require additional analysis if Council chooses to pursue them.

Site A – Current River Park (Recommended)

Technical Analysis

Guiding Criteria Alignment

The Current River Park site has a history of encampment activity over the years and is sufficient in size. Roadway and parking lot access, and the site's flat terrain support emergency response, operational feasibility, and year-round operability. The site is close to transit, and several social services are within 1.5 km. There is no active programming on this part of the site, though the park is available for booking. Utilization rates are very low, with only one recorded booking since 2023.

Environmental Findings

A Due Diligence Risk Assessment (DDRA) related to soil contaminants of concern did not identify any unacceptable risks to human health, but it noted that ground-level produce gardens should be restricted.

Site-Specific Considerations

Through site-specific review, it was identified that the area's existing floodplain mapping is outdated, having last been completed in 1985. Preliminary updated floodplain mapping was provided and reviewed. Based on this information, the proposed area has been slightly shifted northwest, outside the preliminary floodplain boundaries (final site boundaries to be confirmed upon completed floodplain analysis).

The site is a mostly grassy area that limits accessibility in the context of mobility, and the surrounding road network lacks sidewalks and controlled crossings. The proximity to water, including the dam, presents potential safety risks. A multi-use trail currently runs through the proposed area. The cricket pitch in the park is well used, but the site is removed from the pitch.

These considerations can be mitigated through site design and operational measures, including:

- Directing individuals with accessibility needs to designated encampment sites that better meet those needs.
- Temporarily re-routing the walking trail to bypass the encampment area.
- Installing fencing and signage near water and dam access points.
- Maintaining site monitoring and coordinated service delivery.
- Installing fencing with privacy screen to enhance a sense of safety and security within and around the site.
- Restricting ground-level produce gardens.

Consultation Findings

Feedback on this site was mixed across groups. Public survey results were divided, with slightly more opposition than support and a mid-range ranking overall, while business owners expressed relatively low concern. People with lived experience showed strong support and ranked the site first, whereas service providers indicated moderate support. Drop-in event feedback showed lower overall agreement. The Waterfront BIA Board suggested this site instead of Freedom Park, and rail companies raised no concerns.

Recommendation

This site is recommended due to its strong alignment with the Guiding Criteria and site-specific considerations that can be mitigated through design and operational measures.

Site B – Freedom Park (Recommended)

Technical Analysis

Guiding Criteria Alignment

The Freedom Park site has a long history of encampment activity and is close to the Waterfront Transit Terminal and multiple social and health care services. Roadway access and the site's flat and compact terrain support accessibility considerations, operational feasibility, emergency response, and year-round operability. The surrounding road network supports pedestrian safety with sidewalks and controlled crossings. There is no active programming on the site, and it cannot be booked for events.

Environmental Findings

A DDRA related to soil contaminants of concern did not identify any unacceptable risks to human health but noted that ground-level produce gardens should be restricted.

Site-Specific Considerations

Based on input from City divisions and statutory local boards, the proposed site has been refined to exclude the area North of the overpass. This adjustment reflects site access considerations identified through recent operational experience and an access and egress review. The site's size remains sufficient without the area North of the overpass.

The site is near watercourses, and beside a busy roadway, an unfenced rail corridor and LRCA regulated area which presents safety risks. It is also located near high-use waterfront and event spaces. Considerations can be mitigated through site design and operational measures, including:

- Reinforcing safe pedestrian behaviour through design, fencing, signage, and education with encampment residents.
- Installing fencing with privacy screen to create barriers between road and rail infrastructure. It will also enhance a sense of safety and security within and around the site.
- Restricting ground-level produce gardens.
- Maintaining site monitoring and coordinated service delivery.
- Establishing a process whereby event organizers can request on site support during events by assigning community-oriented City staff as scheduling allows (e.g., Encampment Response Team).

Consultation Findings

Feedback on this site varied between groups, with public survey results showing lower agreement and a lower overall ranking. Business owners expressed the highest level of concern among sites. In contrast, people with lived experience and service providers showed moderate to high support, ranking the site second and third respectively. In-person engagement reflected lower agreement. The Waterfront BIA Board raised concerns related to safety, surrounding land uses, and potential impacts on tourism and businesses. CPKC noted objection to this site due to safety concerns.

Recommendation

This site is recommended due to its strong alignment with the Guiding Criteria and site-specific considerations that can be mitigated through design and operational measures.

Site C – Island Drive Park (Not Recommended)

Technical Analysis

Guiding Criteria Alignment

The Island Drive Park site includes sufficient site size and layout to support providing basic services. The area has no active programming and cannot be booked for events. The site has limited past encampment activity. Dirt paths support some accessibility considerations and operational feasibility. However, most of the site's terrain is uneven and naturalized, presenting year-round operability and access challenges for emergency responders on foot. The closest transit stop is 1.3km away and there are no social or health care services within 1.5km.

Site-Specific Considerations

The site is adjacent to an LRCA regulated area identified for riparian habitat improvement. Several species at risk have been observed on-site, further promoting this area for restoration. Safety concerns include proximity to deep water, heavy industrial land use (former thermal power station), and hydroelectric and water pollution control plant infrastructure. The surrounding road network lacks sidewalks and controlled crossings, and limited alternative route options in the event of a prolonged road closure.

While the following mitigation measures could be explored, combined associated costs exceed reasonability for temporary use:

- Installing permanent fencing around identified hazards and infrastructure.
- Confirming environmental conditions and remedial work prior to any use.
- Improving terrain conditions with grading and maintenance, which may negatively impact species at risk.
- Maintaining strong site monitoring and coordinated service delivery.

Consultation Findings

Feedback on this site was generally low across most groups. Public survey results showed limited support and moderate opposition, with a mid-range overall ranking, while business owners expressed the lowest level of concern compared to other sites. People with lived experience indicated mixed views and ranked the site lowest, and both service providers and in-person engagement reflected low levels of support. CPKC noted objection to this site due to safety concerns.

Recommendation

This site is not recommended due to environmental sensitivity and safety risks that would be costly to mitigate.

Site D – Kam River Heritage Park (Not Recommended)

Technical Analysis

Guiding Criteria Alignment

The Kam River Heritage Park site has a long history of encampment activity, and sufficient size and layout to support providing basic services. The City Hall Transit Terminal is nearby, and multiple social and health care services are in the area. Roadway access, paved parking lots, and paved paths beside greenspace support accessibility considerations, operational feasibility, emergency response, and year-round operability. There is no active programming on the site, and it cannot be booked for events. The location also provides some separation from residential areas, reducing the likelihood of conflict.

Site-Specific Considerations

The site is adjacent to a rail yard and watercourse, presenting safety risks. It is also beside an LRCA regulated area identified for riparian habitat improvement. Additionally, the site was previously withdrawn from consideration for the Temporary Village due to cost-prohibitive safety mitigation measures required to satisfy external partners, such as funding dedicated resources to patrol the watercourse.

Although this option was previously withdrawn in the context of the Temporary Village, it was reconsidered for designated sites due to the more limited scale and context-specific nature of this model. Designated encampments are intended to accommodate fewer individuals with reduced infrastructure and staffing, allowing for more proportionate risk management. However, despite the smaller scale, external partner concerns and the mitigation measures required to address them have remained largely consistent, resulting in costs that continue to be prohibitive.

Consultation Findings

Feedback on this site was generally positive across most groups. Public survey results showed the highest level of agreement and ranked second, while business owners ranked the site second in terms of causing concern. People with lived experience indicated moderate to high support, and service providers showed the strongest support, ranking the site highest. In-person engagement also reflected relatively high agreement, though activity-based feedback was less favourable. CPKC noted objections to this site due to safety concerns. Additional stakeholder feedback included a letter expressing opposition from the Thunder Bay Rowing Club.

Recommendation

This site is not recommended, as the cost to mitigate safety risks is not justified for a space without consistent staff supervision or structured programming.

Site E – McKellar & Vickers (Not Recommended)

Technical Analysis

Guiding Criteria Alignment

The McKellar & Vickers site has sufficient size and layout to provide basic services. It does not have active programming or bookable events. The site has limited evidence of past encampment activity, and road access at the site's edges. A road traverses the property, but its condition cannot safely support emergency response vehicles. Most of the site's terrain is uneven and naturalized, presenting year-round operability and access challenges for emergency responders on foot. Several transit stops are nearby while no social or health care services are within 1.5km.

Site-Specific Considerations

The site's safety risks are characterized by an unfenced rail corridor and light industrial area with heavy large vehicle activity. The site's unmaintained and uneven terrain restricts accessibility in the context of mobility. Additionally, it directly borders private property without any physical separation, increasing the risk of unintentional encroachment.

Potential mitigation measures include:

- Installing permanent fencing along the rail corridor.
- Rehabilitating existing thoroughfare to improve access and egress.
- Improving terrain conditions with grading and maintenance.
- Maintaining strong site monitoring and coordinated service delivery.
- Installing fencing with privacy screen to enhance a sense of safety and security within and around the site.

Consultation Findings

Feedback on this site was generally unfavourable across most groups. Public survey results showed the lowest level of agreement, with the site ranked last overall, while business owners expressed a moderate level of concern. In contrast, people with lived experience indicated moderate to high support, though the site ranked lower relative to other options. Service providers and in-person engagement reflected low overall support. CN does not recommend this site due to safety concerns. Additional stakeholder feedback included a letter expressing opposition from Sysco Thunder Bay.

Recommendation

The site is not recommended as its considerations are more difficult and costly to mitigate compared to other options.

Site F – Simpson (Recommended)

Technical Analysis

Guiding Criteria Alignment

The Simpson site has a long history of encampment activity and is close to the City Hall Transit Terminal and multiple social and health care services. Roadway access and the site's flat and compact dirt terrain support accessibility considerations, operational feasibility, emergency response, and year-round operability. The surrounding road network supports pedestrian safety with sidewalks and controlled crossings. There is no active programming on the site, and it cannot be booked for events. The site is slightly smaller than ideal (approximately 0.9 acres) but is workable with intentional site design.

Environmental Findings

A DDRA identified a small area of concern where soil contamination could pose a risk to human health. As per the report's recommendation, steps will be taken to reduce potential exposure, such as raising tents in the affected area to allow for airflow and reduce potential exposure to vapours.

Site-Specific Considerations

The site's health and safety risks include its adjacency to a railyard and former industrial land uses. These risks can be effectively managed by mitigation measures, including:

- Anchoring plastic pallets in the affected area to provide airflow as recommended.
- Repairing existing fencing separating the site from the railyard.
- Installing fencing with privacy screen to enhance a sense of safety and security within and around the site.
- Maintaining strong site monitoring and coordinated service delivery.

Consultation Findings

Feedback on this site was generally strong across most groups. Survey results showed the highest level of agreement and the site ranked first overall, while business owners expressed a moderate level of concern. People with lived experience indicated high support and ranked it third overall, and service providers showed moderate to high support, ranking it second. In-person engagement reflected moderate agreement, with strong relative rankings. CPKC objects due to rail-safety concerns. The Fort William BIA Chair expressed no concerns, noting the site's long use as an encampment area.

Recommendation

This site is recommended due to its strong alignment with the Guiding Criteria and site-specific considerations that can be mitigated through design and operational measures.

Conclusion

The recommended sites result from a process that combined Council-approved tools, comprehensive technical analysis, and robust consultation. Based on this work, it is recommended that the following be approved as designated encampment sites:

- Site A – Current River Park
- Site B – Freedom Park
- Site F – Simpson

While each site presents unique considerations, analysis confirms they can be appropriately mitigated through targeted design and operational measures. Informed by multi-stakeholder feedback and technical analysis, the installation of fencing at the designated sites to mitigate safety risks, define site boundaries, and support effective site management is also recommended. Establishing site-specific emergency response protocols with relevant partners will also be undertaken.

CONSULTATION

The consultation process was extensive and built on prior engagement related to designated and sanctioned encampments. Phase One focused on people with lived and living experience, front-line workers, service providers, Indigenous leadership, and community organizations. That feedback consistently emphasized proximity to services and transit, safety, dignity, sanitation, outreach supports, emergency access, and manageable site size, while reinforcing that designated encampments should be viewed as temporary, harm-reduction responses within a broader housing crisis.

Phase Two broadened consultation to include the wider community, business owners, people with lived and living experience, service providers, a public drop-in session, and targeted stakeholder outreach. Across these efforts, clear patterns emerged in both levels of agreement and site rankings. Sites such as Simpson and Kam River Heritage Park consistently received the highest levels of support and ranked among the top options across multiple groups, while McKellar & Vickers and Island Drive Park were consistently ranked lowest and received the least support. Current River Park and Freedom Park generated more mixed responses.

Across all engagement streams, common themes included safety, cleanliness, crime, impacts on businesses and public spaces, and the need for clear management measures such as providing sanitation services, waste collection, site monitoring, and defined rules. Targeted stakeholder feedback also highlighted site-specific constraints, including concerns from business areas about economic and tourism impacts, and objections from rail infrastructure stakeholders.

FINANCIAL IMPLICATION

The City currently provides site-support services at various encampment locations, including access to toilets, clean water, and waste removal. With the consolidation of services to 3 designated sites, these services can be delivered within existing budgets.

The Simpson Site would require cold-rated and fire-rated pallets to be installed in the area of concern identified by the DDRA. The estimated cost associated with the pallets is \$15,000 plus HST, which can be absorbed within anticipated in-year operating budget variance.

All three sites would require fencing and privacy screening, with an estimated delivery and installation cost of \$200,000 plus HST. As this would be a capital project, financing must be considered in accordance with the Budget Policy 05-02-01.

During the annual budget deliberation process, several capital projects were deferred to align the budget with Council's mandate. To maintain consistency with that approach, if this project is to be prioritized, it is recommended that an approved 2026 capital project be deferred or cancelled to accommodate this work, rather than accessing a reserve or reserve fund. Notwithstanding this approach, Administration has determined that this project does not align with the approved mandate or usage of any City reserve or reserve fund.

Administration has identified the 2026 Mission Island Bridge Construction project, in the amount of \$208,500, as a capital project that could be reprioritized. This 2026 capital funding represented an initial contribution toward the overall bridge construction project. While additional funding was approved in 2027, significant further funding is still required in subsequent years before commencement of construction. The intention was that funds be accumulated incrementally until full project funding was achieved. It is noted that Mission Island Bridge design work was also included in the 2026 Capital Budget and would continue as planned.

Attachment G presents Budget Appropriation 13-2026 which would establish the Designated Encampment Site Fencing capital project, defer the 2026 Mission Island Bridge Construction project, and reallocate the associated project financing accordingly.

BACKGROUND

February 17, 2026, Corporate Report 110-2026 from R. Willianen, Supervisor – Encampment Response was presented and recommended Guiding Criteria to assist with identifying options for designated encampments be approved.

February 10, 2026, Corporate Report 047-2026 from R. Willianen, Supervisor – Encampment Response was presented seeking feedback from the Quality of Life Standing Committee on guiding criteria for identifying designated encampment sites,

and requesting support for proceeding with site identification and the next phase of consultation. The report was referred back to Administration to be re-presented at a future City Council meeting.

October 21, 2024, Corporate Report 384-2024 from C. Olsen, Director Strategy & Engagement was presented and recommended that the Human Rights-Based Community Action Plan be approved, and that a copy of the resolution be sent to the Office of the Federal Housing Advocate, and provincial and federal members of parliament.

October 7, 2024, Corporate Report 384-2024 from C. Olsen, Director Strategy & Engagement was presented as a first report and proposed an enhanced encampment response through a ten-part Human Rights-Based Community Action Plan.

August 12, 2024, Corporate Report 312-2024 from R. Willianen, Policy & Research Analyst and C. Olsen, Director Strategy & Engagement was presented and recommended to Council that the encampment distance guidelines for trails, sidewalks, parking lots and bridges remain at 5 metres, and that they be included in the overall Distance Guidelines that were approved and ratified on July 15, 2024.

July 15, 2024, Memorandum dated July 5, 2024, from C. Olsen, Director Strategy & Engagement was presented and proposed amended distance guidelines to include 20 metres away from private non-residential property and 5 metres away from rivers and railway tracks as they were not originally reflected. The final recommendation as presented in the memorandum was approved and ratified.

June 24, 2024, Corporate Report 252-2024 from R. Willianen, Policy & Research Analyst and C. Olsen, Director Strategy & Engagement was presented to Committee of the Whole and provided recommendations related to adopting distance guidelines, and advocacy items to other orders of government related to encampments and unsheltered homelessness.

May 6, 2024, Council directed that the City conduct an environmental scan of municipal approaches to designated and sanctioned sites, undertake an assessment of recommendations to municipalities by the Office of the Federal Housing Advocate, update the Encampment Response Protocol, further define designated encampments for the City, and continue to coordinate a human-rights based encampment response.

April 22, 2024, Corporate Report 137-2024 from C. Olsen, Director – Strategy & Engagement and R. Willianen, Policy & Research Analyst, was presented to Committee of the Whole and provided an update on the feasibility of designated encampment locations, including community consultation results.

REFERENCE MATERIAL ATTACHED

Attachment A – Preliminary Designated Sites Mapping
Attachment B – Distance Guidelines
Attachment C – Guiding Criteria
Attachment D – Reference Document – Six Potential Sites
Attachment E – Designated Encampment Sites Consultation Findings
Attachment F – Properties Considered and Not Advanced for Further Consultation
Attachment G – Budget Appropriation 13-2026

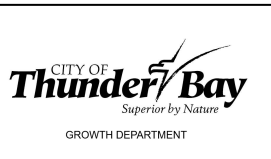
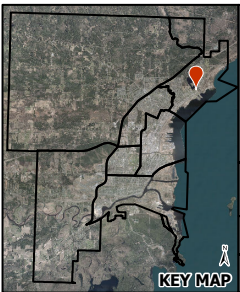
REPORT PREPARED BY

Rilee Willianen, Supervisor – Encampment Response – Growth

REPORT SIGNED AND VERIFIED BY

Kerri Marshall, Commissioner - Growth

Date (04/30/2026)



ENCAMPMENT SITE

Site A - Current River Park

- LEGEND**
- Encampment Site
 - Flood Zone (LRCA 2026)
 - Existing Buildings
 - Parcels

LEGAL: PART OF SECTION 37 NE PT & ML 7 SW PT HERRICKS INST NO 164-D		
PREPARED BY: BB	ROLL NO: 5804010095229000000	SCALE:
FILE: NA	LRO PIN: 622210022	1:1,750

DATE: APRIL 28, 2026	IMAGERY DATE : 2024
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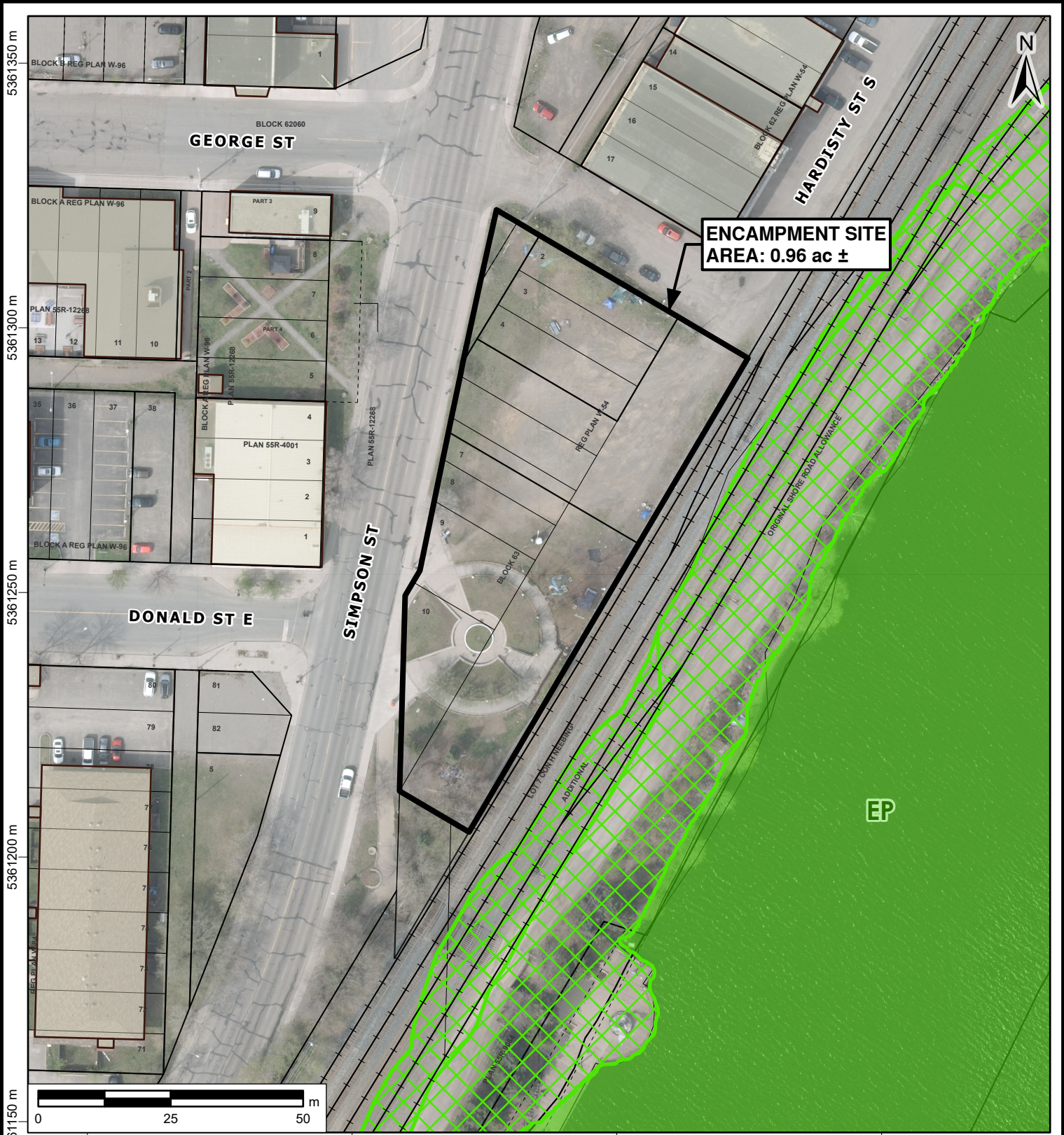
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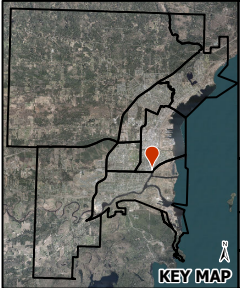
<p>KEY MAP</p>			<h2 style="text-align: center;">ENCAMPMENT SITE</h2> <h3 style="text-align: center;">Site B - Freedom Park</h3>		<p>LEGEND</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Encampment Site EP Zone Flood Zone (EO) Railways Existing Buildings Parcels 	
	<p>LEGAL: N/A</p>		<p>SCALE: 1:1,000</p>		<p>DATE: APRIL 28, 2026 IMAGERY DATE : 2026</p>	
	<p>PREPARED BY: BB</p>	<p>ROLL NO: 5804010038021000000, 5804010038033100000</p>	<p>LRO PIN: 622640002, 622640004, 622640003, 622640008, 622640537</p>			
	<p>FILE: NA</p>					

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ENCAMPMENT SITE
AREA: 0.96 ac ±

EP



ENCAMPMENT SITE

Site F - Simpson

LEGEND	
	Encampment Site
	EP Zone
	Flood Zone (EO)
	Railways
	Existing Buildings
	Parcels

LEGAL: PLAN 54 BLK 63 LOT 2 TO 4 PT LOT 5 TO PT LOT 10 PT LOT 1 CLOSED LANE PT RP 55R2671 PART 1 PART 2

PREPARED BY: BB

ROLL NO: 5804040144044000000

SCALE:

FILE: NA

LRO PIN: 620600153-56

1:1,000

DATE: APRIL 28, 2026

IMAGERY DATE : 2024

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Encampment Distance Guidelines



July 2024

Encampments, defined as locations where one or more people live in an unsheltered area in temporary structures, are not to be located:

On or within 100m of any:

On or within 20m of any:



		
Playground	School or Licensed Daycare	Pool or Splash Pad

	
Highway	Private Property






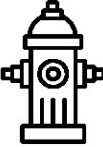




On or within 50m of any:

On or within 10m of any:

		
Lake, Beach, or Pond	Boat Launch	Multi-Use Courts, Sports Field, or Golf Course


	
Public Transit Stop	Formal Heritage Property Designation




On or within 5m of any:

				
Off-Leash Dog Area	Community Garden	Entrance, Exit, or Doorway	Sidewalk or Trail	Bridge or Parking Lot
				
Fire Route or Blocking Fire Hydrant	Cemetery	Accessibility Entrance or Ramp	Railway	River

Within:

To be assessed on a site-by-site basis:


EP Zone

		
No more than 5 tents per cluster, with 10m of separation, up to a max of 5 clusters per site. All structures should aim to be freestanding.		

Distance Guidelines

An encampment, defined as locations where one or more people live in an unsheltered area in temporary structures, are not to be located:

- On or within 100 metres of a school, or licensed children daycare centre.
- On or within 100 metres of a playground, pool, or splash pad.
- On or within 50 metres of any lake, beach, pond, or boat launch.
- On or within 50 metres of any actively programmed park, active sports field, inclusive of but not limited to, skateboard parks, fitness amenities, hockey rinks/arenas, golf courses, ball diamonds, soccer pitches, tennis courts, or any other sports or multi-use courts, as well as stadiums, dugouts, stages, and bleachers.
- On or within 20 metres of a highway.
- On or within 20 metres of any private property line (includes private residential and private non-residential).
- On or within 10 metres of any public transit stop or any formally designated heritage properties.
- On or within 5 metres of any trail, sidewalk, or parking lot or on or under any bridge, including pedestrian access points to such areas and structures.
- On or within 5 meters of any cemetery, including its roads, lanes and paths for travel within the cemetery.
- On or within 5 metres of any off-leash dog area.
- On or within 5 metres of any community garden and including any garden shed or greenhouse.
- On or within 5 metres of any designated fire route, or the entrance to or exit from a designated fire route or located so as not to block any fire hydrant.
- On or within 5 metres of any accessibility entrance or ramp or located in a way that blocks access to such entrances or ramps.
- On or within 5 metres any entrance, exit or a doorway to a building or structure, and including, without limiting the generality of the foregoing, an area adjacent to such entrances or exits required in the event of fire or emergency.
- Within 5 metres of any railway tracks.
- Within 5 metres of rivers.

- Within the Environmental Protection Zone or any area identified as susceptible to flooding, erosion, slope instability, or other environmental hazards that presents a risk to health and safety.
- It is recommended that there be no more than five tents/temporary structures per cluster, with 10m of separation between each cluster, and a maximum of up to 25 tents or 30 individuals at any one location, to be assessed on a site-by-site basis.
- It is recommended that encampments or structures are not to be placed against, under, or be attached or tied to any building, structure, or tree. All temporary shelters or tents should strive to be freestanding. Assessments on impacts to City-owned infrastructure will take place on a site-by-site basis.

Guiding Criteria for Designated Encampment Sites



Ability to Provide Basic Services: Ability to provide and maintain basic services such as portable toilets and regular servicing, garbage collection, potable water access, and outreach support.



Accessibility Considerations: A minimum of two sites should reasonably support accessibility considerations such as the presence of gravel or paved surfaces, recognizing that full accessibility may not be achievable in all locations.



Compatibility with Current Use: Exclusion of spaces with regular permitted, programmed, or revenue-generating uses, including parks with active City-led or contracted programming.



Distance to Services: Reasonable walking distance (approximately 1.5 km or less) to public transportation or essential health and social services.



Emergency and Service Access: Adequate access for emergency responders, sanitation and garbage services, outreach vehicles, and snow clearing operations.



Past Encampment Activity: Preference for locations with encampment activity to avoid introducing encampments into new areas.



Site Size: Ideally, at least one usable acre to allow for appropriate spacing, safety requirements, and access for services and emergency response.



Year-round operability: Sites should be capable of operating safely in all seasons, including winter conditions.

Potential designated encampment sites survey

About this Document

This document accompanies the hard copy *Potential Designated Encampment Sites Survey*.

It provides a summary of each potential site and explains how the locations align with the City's Distance Guidelines and Guiding Criteria. The information is intended to help you understand the context as you complete the survey.

If you are completing the paper survey, you may refer to this document at any time while answering the questions.

Important to know

- The sites shown are potential locations only.
- No final decisions have been made.
- Your feedback will be summarized and shared with City Council to help inform next steps.

Thank you for taking the time to review the information and share your input.

What to Expect on the Next Pages

Each potential site is shown on its own page.

For every site, you will see:

- An aerial image with a red circle showing the general area where a designated encampment could be considered. The circle is approximate and does not represent the exact footprint indicated. In some cases, it may include features (such as roads) that would not be used.
- A QR code linking to Google Maps so you can explore the area in more detail.
- A short summary of how the site aligns with the City's Distance Guidelines and Guiding Criteria.

You can share comments on each site as you review them by writing your feedback in the spaces provided on the hard copy survey. After you have reviewed all sites, you will be asked to rank them from strongest to weakest overall based on your perspective.

If you have questions, please contact encampments@thunderbay.ca.

Share your thoughts on potential designated encampment sites

Get Involved Thunder Bay

Site A - Current River Park



- ✓ **Ability to Provide Basic Services** - Can provide and maintain basic services
- ✗ **Accessibility Considerations** - Does not reasonably support accessibility needs
- ⚠ **Compatibility with Current Use** - No regular programmed or permitted uses; can be rented for a fee but bookings are very rare
- ✓ **Distance Guidelines** - Meets all distance guidelines
- ✓ **Distance to Services** - Social services and public transit within 1.5km
- ✓ **Emergency and Service Access** - Good access due to flat terrain, roadways, and parking lot
- ✓ **Past Encampment Activity** - Presence of encampments over the years
- ✓ **Site Size** - More than one acre of usable space
- ✓ **Year-Round Operability** - Flat terrain and road access supports all-season operations

Site B - Freedom Park



- ✓ **Ability to Provide Basic Services** - Can provide and maintain basic services
- ✓ **Accessibility Considerations** - Reasonably supports accessibility needs
- ✓ **Compatibility with Current Use** - No regular programming or permitted uses; cannot be booked for a fee
- ✓ **Distance Guidelines** - Meets all distance guidelines
- ✓ **Distance to Services** - Social services and public transit within 1.5km
- ✓ **Emergency and Service Access** - Good access due to flat terrain and roadways
- ✓ **Past Encampment Activity** - Presence of encampments over the years
- ✓ **Site Size** - More than one acre of usable space
- ✓ **Year-Round Operability** - Flat terrain and road access supports safe all-season operations

Share your thoughts on potential designated encampment sites

Get Involved Thunder Bay

Site C - Island Drive Park



- ✓ **Ability to Provide Basic Services** - Can provide and maintain basic services
- ⚠ **Accessibility Considerations** - Limited support for accessibility needs
- ✓ **Compatibility with Current Use** - No regular programmed or permitted uses; cannot be booked for a fee
- ✓ **Distance Guidelines** - Meets all distance guidelines
- ⚠ **Distance to Services** - No social services but public transit within 1.5km
- ⚠ **Emergency and Service Access** - Uneven terrain and limited road/path access to entire site
- ⚠ **Past Encampment Activity** - Some encampment activity observed
- ✓ **Site Size** - More than one acre of usable space
- ⚠ **Year-Round Operability** - Uneven terrain and limited road/path access to entire site

Site D - Kam River Heritage Park



- ✓ **Ability to Provide Basic Services** - Can provide and maintain basic services
- ✓ **Accessibility Considerations** - Reasonably supports accessibility considerations
- ✓ **Compatibility with Current Use** - No regular permitted or programmed uses; cannot be booked for a fee
- ✓ **Distance Guidelines** - Meets all distance guidelines
- ✓ **Distance to Services** - Social services and public transit within 1.5km
- ✓ **Emergency and Service Access** - Terrain and roadways support good access
- ✓ **Past Encampment Activity** - Presence of encampments over past years
- ✓ **Site Size** - More than one acre of usable space
- ✓ **Year-Round Operability** - Terrain and road access supports safe all-season operations

Share your thoughts on potential designated encampment sites

Get Involved Thunder Bay

Site E - McKellar & Vickers



✓ **Ability to Provide Basic Services** - Can provide and maintain basic services

✗ **Accessibility Considerations** - Does not reasonably support accessibility considerations

✓ **Compatibility with Current Use** - No regular programmed or permitted uses; cannot be booked for a fee

✓ **Distance Guidelines** - Meets all distance guidelines

⚠ **Distance to Services** - No social services but public transit within 1.5km

⚠ **Emergency and Service Access** - Uneven terrain and lack of roadways and paths

⚠ **Past Encampment Activity** - Some activity of encampments

✓ **Site Size** - More than one acre of usable space

⚠ **Year-Round Operability** - Uneven terrain and lack of roadways and paths

Share your thoughts on potential designated encampment sites

Get Involved Thunder Bay

Site F - Simpson



- ✓ **Ability to Provide Basic Services** - Can provide and maintain basic services
- ✓ **Accessibility Considerations** - Reasonably supports accessibility considerations
- ✓ **Compatibility with Current Use** - No regular programmed or permitted uses; cannot be booked for a fee
- ✓ **Distance Guidelines** - Meets all distance guidelines
- ✓ **Distance to Services** - Social services and public transit within 1.5km
- ✓ **Emergency and Service Access** - Flat terrain and roadways support good access
- ✓ **Past Encampment Activity** - Presence of encampments over past years
- ⚠ **Site Size** - Slightly under one acre of usable space at 0.9 acres
- ✓ **Year-Round Operability** - Flat terrain and road access supports all-season operations

Designated Encampment Sites Consultation Results

Background

The City undertook a two-phase consultation process to inform the development of recommendations related to designated encampment sites. The first phase was in late 2025 and focused on engagement with front-line services providers, Indigenous leadership and community organizations, and people with lived experience, as directed by the City's *10-Part Enhanced Encampment Response Plan* (10-Part Plan). Building on this foundation, the second phase in March 2026 both deepened engagement with these same groups and expanded outreach to include additional perspectives, such as the broader community and local businesses.

Together, these efforts reflect a wide range of qualitative and quantitative feedback on site locations, potential impacts, safety considerations, and service suggestions. This feedback has informed staff analysis and shaped the recommendations being brought forward to Council, with the sections below providing more detailed summaries of each engagement activity and the key themes that emerged.

Phase One Consultation – 2025

In alignment with the 10-Part Plan's direction to collaborate with community partners, people with lived and living experience, and Indigenous leaders and representative organizations on designated sites, Administration engaged with the stakeholders below in December 2025:

- 50 people with lived and living experience of encampments;
- 33 front-line workers participating in the local Outreach Workers Network; and
- 18 community partners, including Indigenous leaders and representative organizations, involved in direct encampment-related service delivery.

People with Lived and Living Experience

The City engaged directly with approximately 50 people with lived and living experience of homelessness and encampments, facilitated by the City's Encampment Response Team. Outreach was conducted in person through existing connections, including engagement while riding the Care Bus, allowing participation that was accessible and grounded in lived experience.

Generally, access to nearby supports, ease of movement, and personal safety were top priorities. Areas situated closer to services were generally seen as more workable for meeting daily needs, while more remote locations were described as creating added challenges. At the same time, some participants expressed a preference for more secluded settings, noting that increased privacy can contribute to a greater sense of comfort and dignity.

Front-line Workers

The City engaged with 33 front-line outreach workers through an online survey distributed primarily via the Outreach Workers' Network and by attending an Outreach Workers' Network meeting for direct engagement. This engagement captured perspective from workers with direct, day-to-day experience supporting people living in encampments, providing practical insight into site considerations, safety issues, and service delivery needs.

Overall, participants emphasized that proximity to services, accessibility, and safety are the most critical factors to consider when identifying designated encampments. Locations closer to existing service and social support networks were generally viewed as more feasible from a service delivery perspective, while sites further removed from supports were identified as presenting additional challenges.

Service Providers and Indigenous Leadership

In December 2025, City staff convened an in-person facilitated engagement session with representatives from eighteen community organizations, with director-level or equivalent participation from Indigenous leadership and agencies providing direct services to people living in encampments. The feedback summarized below reflects the input related to the early site review, as well as discussion on services and supports required to make designated sites safe and functional.

Feedback from this session also contributed to refining and validating the Guiding Criteria for site selection, which were subsequently presented to and approved by City Council. Participants reiterated key priorities such as proximity to services and transit, access to sanitation and outreach support, operational and emergency access, compatibility with surrounding land uses, and the importance of safety, dignity, and manageable site size. While this input helped confirm the overall criteria framework, the primary focus of the session was applying the criteria to a set of early potential locations, all of which were carried forward into the most recent round of consultation, with one additional site added at that later stage.

Participants reviewed the early identified sites through an operational and lived-experience lens, highlighting relative strengths, risks, and trade-offs rather than

expressing final preferences. Sites that were already established or located near clusters of services – such as Freedom Park and Simpson Street – were recognized for their accessibility, proximity to outreach and health supports, and familiarity to both service providers and people currently living in encampments. At the same time, concerns were raised regarding safety, visibility, proximity to rail infrastructure and busy roadways, accessibility for people with mobility challenges, noise, and potential conflicts with nearby public uses or events. Other locations, including parks or more isolated areas, were viewed as presenting challenges related to distance from services, lack of infrastructure, or heavy competing recreational use.

Across all sites, participants consistently emphasized that the success of designated encampments depends on the availability of coordinated services and support. There was strong agreement on the need for access to sanitation infrastructure (washrooms, showers, garbage collection, potable water), harm reduction supplies, medical and mental health outreach, cultural supports, and clear, reliable mechanisms for contacting emergency services. Participants also stressed the importance of coordinated service delivery among agencies to reduce duplication, improve safety for both residents and workers, and for enhancing consistency. Many noted that designated encampments should be understood as temporary, harm-reduction responses within a broader housing crisis, with careful attention to language, dignity and community impact.

Phase Two Consultation – 2026

Building on 2025's efforts, the City deepened and broadened consultation. These expanded efforts, presented in alphabetical order, included surveys seeking input on six potential designated encampment sites from:

- Members of the broader community, including business owners through targeted survey questions;
- People with lived and living experience of homelessness; and
- Staff of homelessness service providers.

Activities also included a public drop-in session, and targeted outreach to companies and business representative organizations. The City also promoted and collected open feedback via its Encampment Response Office email at encampments@thunderbay.ca.

Across all surveys, the response rate was over 1000. This level of participation represents one of the highest response rates across recent City survey engagement efforts. While results are not statistically significant and should be interpreted with caution, each response has been carefully reviewed and considered. The feedback reflects a range of perspectives from those who chose to participate and has been considered alongside technical analysis and policy considerations to inform staff analysis and recommendations.

Survey Results – Broader Community

The broader community survey was available from March 2 to March 15, 2026. It was administered online through the City’s Get Involved platform, with paper copies also available at City Hall and all four branches of the Thunder Bay Public Library. A total of 864 surveys were completed. A high-level overview of key findings is presented below.

Postal Code Distribution

Respondents were asked to provide their postal code (optional) to help understand how perspectives may vary across different areas of the city. This information was analyzed to explore whether levels of agreement with each site differed geographically.

A total of 641 respondents provided a postal code. The distribution is summarized below:

- 26% of respondents did not provide a postal code
- P7A – 24% (generally north and northeast areas)
- P7C – 23% (generally south-central areas)
- P7B – 11% (generally central and north-central areas)
- P7E – 9% (generally south-central and southern areas)
- P7G, P7J, & P7K – 7% (generally semi-rural and rural areas)
- P0T & B1P – suppressed due to low response rate

Analysis indicates a general pattern where respondents expressed lower levels of agreement with sites located closer to their area of residence, and higher levels of agreement with sites located farther away.

For example, the Current River Park Site (north side) received lower agreement from respondents in northern postal codes (28% in P7A and 31% in P7B), compared to higher agreement from respondents in southern postal codes (65% in P7C and 53% in P7E).

A similar pattern was observed for the Simpson Site (south side), where agreement was lower among respondents in southern postal codes (56% in P7C and 46% in P7E), and higher among respondents in northern postal codes (76% in P7A and 67% in P7B). This pattern was generally consistent across sites, except for *Site E – McKellar & Vickers*, which had lower levels of agreement across all postal code groups.

Indigenous Identity

Respondents were asked (optionally) if they identify as Indigenous, recognizing that Indigenous peoples are overrepresented among those experiencing homelessness and

living in encampments in Thunder Bay. This information was used to explore whether perspectives on potential sites differed based on Indigenous identity.

A total of 62 respondents identified as Indigenous. Analysis did not identify any meaningful differences in levels of agreement or disagreement between respondents who identified as Indigenous and those who did not. Differences observed across sites were 10% or less.

Levels of Agreement by Site

Respondents were required to indicate their level of agreement with each potential site. This question was mandatory to ensure consistent feedback across all locations and to allow for direct comparison of responses between sites. Results are summarized below based on combined agreement (agree/somewhat agree) and disagreement (somewhat disagree/disagree).

- The Kam River Heritage Park Site and Simpson Site received the highest levels of agreement (61% and 61%, respectively) and lowest levels of disagreement (32% and 30%, respectively).
- The Current River Park Site (42% agreement; 51% disagreement) and Island Dive Park Site (38% agreement; 49% disagreement) received mixed responses.
- The Freedom Park Site received lower levels of agreement (34%) and higher levels of disagreement (59%).
- The McKellar & Vickers Site received the lowest level of agreement (21%) and the highest level of disagreement (64%).

Neutral responses ranged from 7% to 15% across all sites, indicating that most respondents expressed a clear position.

Summary of Site-Specific Comments

Respondents also had an optional opportunity to provide comments on each site. A total of 2639 comments were received, averaging 449 comments per site. Open-ended responses underwent a codified analysis.

Overall, feedback reflects that perceived proximity to services, nearby land uses, and potential impacts on public space were the most influential factors shaping views.

- Sites with higher levels of agreement (Kam River Heritage Park and Simpson) were more often described as having good access to services, fewer impacts on surrounding uses, and existing encampment activity that suggests feasibility.
- Sites with lower levels of agreement (Freedom Park and McKellar & Vickers) were more frequently associated with proximity to sensitive uses (e.g., residential

areas, tourism, or businesses), concerns about public space impacts, and overall site suitability.

- Sites with more mixed responses (Current River Park and Island Drive Park) raised a broader range of concerns, including distance from services, environmental conditions, and proximity to schools, recreation areas, or residential neighborhoods.

Across all sites, respondents consistently identified the need for clear management measures, including waste management, physical separation (e.g., fencing), and defined rules.

A portion of comments reflected broader views on encampments, including general opposition to encampments, preference for alternative solutions (e.g., housing or shelter), and beliefs that encampments lack cleanliness and order.

Ranking of Sites (Strongest to Weakest)

Respondents were required to rank all six sites from strongest to weakest based on overall preference. This approach supports each site being considered relative to the others and allows for consistent comparison across responses. The sites were ranked as follows, showing consistency with the level of agreement results:

1. Site F – Simpson
2. Site D – Kam River Heritage Park
3. Site C – Island Drive Park
4. Site A – Current River Park
5. Site B – Freedom Park
6. Site E – McKellar & Vickers

Summary of Open Comments

At the end of the survey, respondents were provided with an opportunity to share additional comments. A total of 494 responses were reviewed and coded into key themes to identify common perspectives and areas of concern.

Because individual responses could raise more than one issue, comments were coded across multiple themes where applicable. As such, the percentages below reflect the proportion of coded responses within each theme, not the proportion of all 494 survey responses.

Several consistent themes emerged:

- **Sentiment toward designated encampments (120 coded responses):** A majority of sentiment-related comments expressed opposition (54%), while

smaller proportions reflected support (9%) or support with concerns (2%). A fifth expressed a preference for existing encampment locations (20%).

- **Location and land use compatibility (157 coded responses):** Nearly half of coded responses related to proximity to sensitive uses (48%), followed by impacts on businesses and tourism (27%).
- **Safety and security concerns (98 coded responses):** Most comments referenced general health and safety (58%), followed by safety of vulnerable populations (32%) and crime-related concerns (22%).
- **Community and neighbourhood impacts (74 coded responses):** The majority of comments related to cleanliness, garbage, sanitation, and discarded paraphernalia (65%), with 38% referencing neighbourhood disruption.
- **Service access and infrastructure (45 coded responses):** Most comments emphasized that access to services such as health supports, outreach, and transit is important (91%).
- **Philosophical or policy perspectives (194 coded responses):** The largest number of comments referenced alternative solutions such as housing, shelter, or treatment (36%) and the need to address root causes (28%).
- **Suggestions and mitigation (69 coded responses):** Comments most often referenced policy or process measures (41%) and infrastructure improvements (38%).

Additional comments included site-specific feedback, suggested alternative locations, and broader considerations such as trust in decision-making, urgency, and communication.

Business Owner Insights

A total of 109 respondents identified as business owners or operators, of which 61 respondents (55%) reported concerns about a site impacting their business.

Of the 61 respondents, when asked to identify all sites causing concern (select all that apply), the Freedom Park Site (50%) was most frequently identified, followed by Kam River Heritage Park Site (40%), Simpson Site (38%), McKellar & Vickers Site (36%), Current River Park Site (36%), and Island Drive Park Site (24%).

Across all sites, concerns were consistent in nature. The most frequently identified concerns were crime (95% average), property maintenance (91% average), and customer perceptions (85% average). Employee safety (82% average) and property value impacts (74% average) were also regularly noted.

Respondents were also asked to identify what would help address their concerns (select all that apply). A notable finding is that a significant portion of the 61 respondents indicated that no measures would address their concerns, particularly for the Simpson Site (73%), Island Drive Park Site (71%), Current River Park Site (67%), and Kam River Heritage Park Site (65%). Where mitigation measures were identified, the most frequently selected supports were regular monitoring (31% average), enhanced cleanliness (29% average), and security features (28% average).

Survey Results - People with Lived and Living Experience of Homelessness

In parallel to the broader community survey, a paper-based survey was conducted with people with lived and living experience of homelessness (PWLLE). It was administered in person by the City's Encampment Response Team to support informed participation. The team initially sought to engage individuals directly at encampment locations during daytime hours. However, as individuals were often not present, the approach was adapted to improve access to meaningful participation. To that end, the team conducted surveys at homelessness service organizations, including the Salvation Army and Dew Drop Inn on the north side, and PACE, Grace Place, and Shelter House on the south side.

A total of 92 surveys were completed. Of those who participated, 66% reported direct experience living in an encampment, while 34% did not. In addition, 57% of respondents identified as Indigenous and 44% as non-Indigenous. Analysis did not identify any significant variation in responses based on Indigenous identity.

Levels of Agreement by Site

Results from PWLLE respondents are summarized below based on combined agreement (agree/somewhat agree) and disagreement (somewhat disagree/disagree).

- The Current River Park Site received the highest level of agreement (79%) and the lowest level of disagreement (20%).
- The Simpson Site also received strong support (71% agreement; 25% disagreement).
- The Freedom Park Site and McKellar & Vickers Site each received 66% agreement, with disagreement at 32% and 26%, respectively.
- The Kam River Heritage Park Site received 62% agreement and 33% disagreement.
- The Island Drive Park Site received more mixed responses, with 48% agreement and 46% disagreement.

Overall, PWLLE responses show majority agreement across most sites, with more mixed perspectives for the Island Drive Park site. Compared to broader community

responses, PWLLE respondents generally expressed higher levels of agreement and lower levels of disagreement across most sites.

Summary of Site-Specific Comments

Open-ended, site-specific comments from PWLLE respondents were reviewed and coded into key themes. Response volumes were low across most categories. Therefore, findings are presented at a high level.

Comments most often related to access to social supports and services, with the Kam River Heritage Park and Simpson sites viewed more positively, and the Current River Park and Island Drive Park sites more frequently identified as being farther from services. Some feedback also referenced safety considerations (including environmental conditions and proximity to infrastructure) and site suitability.

Generally, PWLLE commentary focused on practical considerations related to access and site conditions, with limited and varied input across other themes.

Ranking of Sites (Strongest to Weakest)

PWLLE respondents were asked to rank all six sites from strongest to weakest based on overall preference. Based on average rankings, sites were ordered as follows:

1. Site A – Current River Park
2. Site B – Freedom Park
3. Site F – Simpson
4. Site D – Kam River Heritage Park
5. Site E – McKellar & Vickers
6. Site C – Island Drive Park.

Compared to broader community results, PWLLE respondents showed a stronger preference for the Current River Park site and relatively higher ranking for the Freedom Park site.

Summary of Open Comments

A small number of additional open-ended responses (n=12) were received. Given the low response rate, findings are not reported quantitatively. Comments generally reflected considerations related to proximity to sensitive uses, the importance of access to services, and suggested mitigation measures such as infrastructure improvements.

Survey Results - Staff of Homelessness Service Providers

An online survey was distributed to local organizations that serve individuals living in encampments, resulting in 79 responses. Of these, 22% identified as working for an Indigenous organization. When analyzed by Indigenous organization status, no significant differences in responses were observed.

Most respondents were front-line staff (56%), followed by those in supervisory roles or higher (27%). Administrative staff and program coordinators made up 10% of respondents, while 7% selected “other,” which primarily included health care workers.

Levels of Agreement by Site

Respondents were asked to indicate their level of agreement with each potential site. Results are summarized below based on combined agreement (agree/somewhat agree) and disagreement (somewhat disagree/disagree).

- The Kam River Heritage Park Site received the highest level of agreement (71%) and lowest level of disagreement (25%).
- The Simpson Site also received strong support (63% agreement; 27% disagreement).
- The Freedom Park Site (59% agreement; 34% disagreement) and Current River Park Site (56% agreement; 35% disagreement) received moderate-high levels of support.
- The Island Drive Park Site (30% agreement; 61% disagreement) and McKellar & Vickers Site (24% agreement; 54% disagreement) received the lowest levels of agreement and highest levels of disagreement.

These findings are generally consistent with broader community results, though service providers show comparatively higher agreement for the Kam River Heritage Park Site and clearer opposition to the Island Drive Park and McKellar & Vickers sites.

Summary of Site-Specific Comments

Open-ended, site-specific comments from service providers were reviewed and coded into key themes. Response volumes were modest, and findings are presented at a high level.

Comments primarily focused on access to services, safety considerations, and overall site suitability. The Kam River Heritage Park and Simpson sites were more often viewed as having favourable access and conditions, with the Freedom Park and Current River Park sites also generally viewed more positively. In contrast, the Island Drive Park and McKellar & Vickers sites were more frequently associated with access challenges or suitability concerns.

Safety-related feedback was limited and generally reflected site-specific considerations, while some comments noted that existing encampment activity at select locations may support feasibility.

Ranking of Sites (Strongest to Weakest)

Service providers were asked to rank all six sites from strongest to weakest based on overall preference, resulting in the following:

1. Site D – Kam River Heritage Park
2. Site F – Simpson
3. Site B – Freedom Park
4. Site A – Current River Park
5. Site E – McKellar & Vickers
6. Site C – Island Drive Park

Compared to broader community and PWLLE results, service provider rankings align more closely with the PWLLE pattern.

Summary of Open Comments

Open-ended comments from service providers were reviewed and coded into key themes. A total of 20 responses were received. Given the relatively small number of responses, findings are presented at a high level.

Feedback reflected a range of views, with comments most often focused on access to services, considerations for vulnerable populations, and broader policy or system-level perspectives. Several respondents emphasized the importance of proximity to health, outreach, and support services, as well as the need to consider impacts on individuals currently experiencing homelessness. A small number of comments referenced site suitability factors, including proximity to hazards or sensitive uses. Suggestions for mitigation were minimal and did not show consistent patterns.

Public Drop-In Session

A public drop-in session was held on March 18, 2026, from 5:00 p.m. to 7:00 p.m. at Intercity Shopping Centre to provide an additional, in-person opportunity for community members to review information and share feedback.

Approximately 125 members of the public attended. Display boards were set up outlining each potential site, including site-specific information and analysis of alignment with the Guiding Criteria. Staff were available throughout the session to answer questions and provide clarification.

Participants were invited to take part in interactive activities that mirrored the survey, including indicating their level of agreement with each site, ranking sites from strongest to weakest, and providing general comments. Paper copies of the survey were also available for those who preferred to complete the questionnaire independently.

For one activity, participants were asked to place one sticker per site to indicate their level of agreement. While most participants followed this direction, results demonstrate that some individuals placed multiple stickers on a single site. As a result, findings from the drop-in session are to be interpreted with caution.

Level of Agreement – Survey Results + Interactive Activity

Due to participation limitations in the interactive activity (e.g., multiple stickers per person), results are presented together with the survey results at a high level and should be interpreted with caution.

Across both formats, a consistent pattern of agreement and disagreement emerged:

- The Kam River Heritage Park Site received the highest overall level of agreement (73% agree/somewhat agree) and lowest level of disagreement (26% disagree/somewhat disagree).
- Both the Simpson Site (50% agreement, 49% disagreement) and the Current River Park Site (48% agreement, 52% disagreement) showed mixed support.
- The Freedom Park Site (39% agreement, 55% disagreement) and the Island Drive Park Site (24% agreement, 71% disagreement) showed lower levels of agreement than disagreement.
- The McKellar & Vickers Site had the lowest level of agreement (4%) and the high level of disagreement (88%).

Summary of Site-Specific Comments

Open-ended, site-specific comments from the drop-in survey were reviewed and coded into key themes. Response volumes were modest, and findings are presented at a high level.

Comments primarily related to proximity to surrounding uses and overall site suitability. The Current River Park and McKellar & Vickers sites were more often associated with proximity-related concerns, while the Freedom Park, Kam River Heritage Park, and Simpson sites were more frequently identified as locations where existing encampment activity may support feasibility.

Ranking of Sites (Strongest to Weakest)

Participants at the public drop-in session were invited to rank all six sites from strongest to weakest through both paper surveys (n=26) and an interactive activity (n=37).

Survey results ranked sites as follows:

1. Site F – Simpson
2. Site D – Kam River Heritage Park
3. Site B – Freedom Park
4. Site A – Current River Park
5. Site C – Island Drive Park
6. Site E – McKellar and Vickers

The interactive activity showed a different pattern:

1. Site B – Freedom Park
2. Site F – Simpson
3. Site A – Current River Park
4. Site E – McKellar & Vickers
5. Site C – Island Drive Park
6. Site D – Kam River Heritage Park

Despite these differences, both formats indicate stronger relative preference for the Simpson, Freedom Park, and Current River Park sites, and consistently lower rankings for the Island Drive Park and McKellar & Vickers sites.

Summary of Open Comments

Open-ended comments were received through both the survey (n=16) and standalone submissions (n=15). These responses were reviewed and coded into key themes. Given the small number of responses across both sources, findings are presented at a high level and should be interpreted with caution.

Overall, feedback was varied but generally more critical in nature, with comments most often focused on safety and community impacts, including general health and safety, crime-related concerns, and cleanliness or maintenance issues.

Some respondents also raised location-related considerations, such as proximity to surrounding uses and potential impacts on public spaces. Policy-related perspectives were present but limited, including views that encampments may worsen existing issues, should be located away from public view, or require broader system-level responses.

Email Feedback

To provide an additional and accessible way for the public to share input, the City promoted the option to submit feedback directly to the Encampment Response Office

via email. This option was communicated through media releases, media interviews, and social media posts as part of the broader engagement approach.

A total of 26 communications were received. Given the relatively small number of responses, findings are presented at a high level. Feedback reflected a range of perspectives, including both supportive and critical views. Comments most often related to site location considerations, particularly proximity to surrounding uses, as well as safety and community impacts, including cleanliness and general site conditions. Some respondents also raised policy-related considerations, such as the role of other orders of government and broader approaches to addressing homelessness.

Further, a letter from the Thunder Bay Rowing Club Board of Directors (the TBRC Board) was received expressing opposition to the Kam River Heritage Park Site. Their submission emphasized concerns related to safety, emergency access, and the continued availability of public waterfront access. The TBRC Board noted potential conflicts with rowing activities and major events hosted at the site, as well as challenges related to unmanaged encampment activity occurring outside a designated area, given the Club's lack of control over adjacent lands. The letter underscored the importance of maintaining safe access, mitigating spillover impacts, and preserving the park's public function.

A letter was also received from Sysco Canada expressing opposition to the McKellar & Vickers Site. Their submission focused on land-use compatibility and operational considerations associated with having a designated encampment adjacent to a 24/7 food distribution facility. The company identified risks related to food safety standards, truck access and circulation, employee safety, and service continuity for hospitals, long-term care homes, and other institutions. The letter also referenced past site-related safety and security issues and argued that the location does not align with the City's stated site-evaluation criteria.

Business Owners & Representative Organizations

Due to limited staff capacity, site-specific meetings with nearby business owners were not feasible. However, recognizing that Administration's recommendation would include at least one site in both the North and South cores, targeted engagement was conducted with the Business Improvement Area (BIA) Boards representing these areas.

Additionally, the BIAs and Thunder Bay Chamber of Commerce were asked to circulate the public survey to their membership, noting that the survey included specific questions for business owners and operators. The Chamber supported this effort by distributing the survey through its newsletter and advising that City staff were available to meet and could be contacted directly at encampments@thunderbay.ca.

All public communications reinforced that business owners and organizations were welcome to provide feedback directly to staff through this email channel.

Waterfront BIA Board

Staff met with the Waterfront BIA to discuss potential designated encampment sites, with most feedback focused on Freedom Park. Members raised concerns about distance guidelines and site-selection criteria, noting the need to account for nearby tourism and waterfront businesses. Safety issues were identified around pedestrian movement and driver sightlines at the nearby roundabout, with suggestions that Current River Park may offer better visibility. Additional concerns included proximity to rail infrastructure, water, businesses, and a school, as well as the implications of locating an encampment near downtown and the marina.

The Waterfront BIA also questioned how the City would manage capacity, prevent expansion into areas like the McVicar Creek corridor, and address encampments outside designated sites. Follow-up communications highlighted operational impacts such as litter, aggressive bird activity, and occasional theft of patio furniture and plants. Suggested mitigation measures included public education, coordinated clean-ups, providing seating within encampments, and creating garden spaces. It was also noted that well-designed, shared encampment spaces could help reduce impacts on surrounding businesses.

Fort William BIA Board

A meeting was arranged with the Fort William BIA but was subsequently cancelled by the BIA due to unforeseen circumstances. The rescheduled timing conflicted with the public drop-in session, and as a result, the meeting did not proceed. Follow-up feedback was received from the Chair, who noted that the Simpson Site is an area that has historically been used as an encampment and did not see any issues with its continued presence, should that be Council's decision.

Infrastructure & Utility Companies

Given the proximity of several potential sites to rail infrastructure and one site's proximity to a hydro transmission tower, Administration undertook targeted outreach to relevant infrastructure and utility stakeholders, including Canadian Pacific Kansas City (CPKC), Canadian National (CN), and Hydro One. Hydro One did not provide comments.

CPKC provided site-specific feedback indicating no concerns with the Current River Park Site and the McKellar & Vickers Site. However, due to their proximity to active rail infrastructure and misalignment with proximity guideline setbacks, CPKC expressed

opposition to the Freedom Park Site, Island Drive Park Site, Kam River Heritage Park Site, and the Simpson Site.

CN noted that most sites are located near CPKC's infrastructure and operations, while the McKellar & Vickers site is the only one near CN's infrastructure. Due to safety concerns, CN does not recommend this site.

Address	Acres	Park Name (If Applicable)	Primary Reason Not Further Pursued
560 CHAMPLAIN PL	0.9		No usable space with distance guidelines applied
367 MUNRO ST	0.9		No usable space with distance guidelines applied
915 COCHRANE ST	1.0		Commercial water refill station
194 MARTHA ST	1.0	Volunteer Pool Park	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
356 LAMBTON CRES	1.0	Lambton Playground and Park	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
122 EMPIRE AVE E	1.1		Active City yard
900 WALSH ST W	1.1		No usable space with distance guidelines applied
201 RENFREW RD	1.1		0.1 acres of usable space with distance guidelines applied
433 CUYLER ST	1.1		0.2 acres of usable space with distance guidelines applied
107 ENNISKILLEN AVE	1.2		No usable space with distance guidelines applied
1010 ATLANTIC AVE	1.2		Adjacent to active playfield
345 RIVER ST	1.2		Insufficient access for emergency services
114 MILES ST E & 119 SIMPSON ST	1.2		Not approved as Temporary Shelter Village location
120 ANTEN ST	1.2		0.3 acres of usable space with distance guidelines applied
1701 HOME AVE	1.2		0.6 acres of usable space with distance guidelines applied
1328 ALPINE AVE	1.3		No usable space with distance guidelines applied
280 WILSON ST	1.4	Wilson Street Park	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
578 SIMON FRASER DR	1.4	Fraserdale Parkette	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
MAYFLOWER PARK	1.4	Mayflower Park	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
99 ACADEMY DR	1.5	Academy Park	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
UNIBERRY PARKETTE	1.5	Uniberry Parkette	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
265 BRUNSWICK ST N	1.6	Brunswick Park	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
1125 HURON AVE	1.7		Insufficient access for emergency services
160 LANGWORTHY AVE	1.8	Academy Park	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
127 ASHLAND PL	1.8	Inglewood Parkette	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
265 POPLAR AVE	1.8	Poplar Park	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
107TH ST	1.9	Pirate Park	Usable space within a park with playground
661 THORNLOE DR	2.0		Not approved as surplus land for housing
215 FRANKLIN ST N	2.0	Franklin Park	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
1115 TARBUTT ST S	2.0	Tarbutt Park	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
545 HIGH ST S	2.0	High Street Pak	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
MAGOLIA DR & ARTHUR ST W	2.1		No known encampment activity on or near the site
TOPAZ PLACE	2.1		0.1 acres of usable space with distance guidelines applied
400 VICKERS ST N	2.1	Dease Park	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
575 MONTREAL ST	2.1		No known encampment activity on or near the site
461 TUSCANY DR	2.1	Tuscany Park	0.4 acres of usable space with distance guidelines applied
144 PIONEER DR	2.2		Adjacent to active playfield
640 MAUREEN ST	2.2		No known encampment activity on or near the site
240 PICTON AVE	2.2	Picton Park	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
145 HIGH ST S	2.3	Hillcrest Park	0.3 acres of usable space with distance guidelines applied
3255 WILROY AVE	2.5	Stanley Park	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
2105 SILLS ST	2.5	Victoria Park	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
411 DEWE AVE	2.7	Waddington Park	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
150 EMPIRE AVE E	2.7		Active City yard
24 SHIPYARD DR	2.7	Fisherman's Park	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
629 DALHOUSIE DR	2.8		No usable space with distance guidelines applied
1000 ATHABASCA ST	3.0		Active City yard
420 EDWARD ST S	3.2	Albert E Allin	0.7 acres of usable space with distance guidelines applied
1228 PICCARD AVE	3.2	Timberline Drive Parkette	Park with recreational equipment
PARKDALE PARK	3.3		Usable space is within park with playground
625 WATERLOO ST S	3.6	Alma Adair Park	Balance number of properties for each side of town
1165 HURON AVE	3.7		Adjacent to Trans Canada Highway exit
NEWCASTLE DR	3.8		No usable space with distance guidelines applied
581 JAMES ST N	4.1	James and Vale Playground	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
WAVERLY ST	4.3	Waverly Park	Usable space is within a park that can be booked a fee and bookings are common
1117 EUCLID AVE	4.4	Wayland Park	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
1355 PICCARD AVE	4.5		Future northwest arterial
80 MARLBOROUGH ST	4.5	Carrick Park	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
415 LELAND AVE S	4.6	Green Acres Park	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
141 HUMBER CRES	5.0	Humber Park	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
321 RYERSON CRES	5.2		0.5 acres of usable space with distance guidelines applied
339 FASSINA ST	5.6	Valley Park	No usable space with distance guidelines applied
321 MADELINE ST	6.1		0.1 acres of usable space with distance guidelines applied
444 RAY BLVD	6.3		Adjacent to an active playfield
1126 FORT WILLIAM RD	7.2		Under a lease agreement
374 RIVIERA DR	7.2	River Terrace Park	0.2 acres of usable space with distance guidelines applied
120 Clarkson St S	8.7		No usable space with distance guidelines applied
1700 ARTHUR ST E	9.0	Vickers Park	Usable space is within park with playground
785 CUMBERLAND ST N	9.7		Adjacent to an active playfield
661 JAMES ST N	10.1		Insufficient access for emergency services
173 BALSAM ST	10.3	Brent Park	Usable area has insufficient access for emergency services
HAMMOND AVE	12.1		Active Thunder Bay Fire Rescue training grounds
105 WARDROPE AVE	23.5		Adjacent to Trans Canada Highway
198 COUNTY BLVD	23.7	County Park	0.4 acres of usable space with distance guidelines applied
1115 NEEBING AVE	33.3	Westfort Playfield	Usable space is adjacent to an active playfield



Memorandum

TO: Mayor & Council **FILE:**

FROM: Krista Power, Director – Legislative Services & City Clerk
City Manager’s Office – Office of the City Clerk

DATE: 04/29/2026 (mm/dd/yyyy)

SUBJECT: Petition – Report 209-2026-Designated Encampment Sites

MEETING & DATE: Special Committee of the Whole - 05/06/2026 (mm/dd/yyyy)

The attached petition was received by the Office of the City Clerk relative to Designated Encampment Sites and a request from residents that City Council does not select the area of McVicar Creek between Court Street North and Cumberland Street North as a designated encampment site. The petition meets the requirements of the Petition Policy 03-03-13 and includes 83 signatures.

Correspondence has been sent to the head petitioner advising that the petition will be included in the Special Committee of the Whole agenda for May 6, 2026. The petition has also been forwarded to the Strategy & Engagement Division, for information.

Petition to Thunder Bay City Council

Signatures collected September/October 2025

Asking City Council not to designate the McVicar Creek area between Court Street North and Cumberland Street North as an encampment site.

PRINT Name	Signature	Address	Phone
Chris Higgins	<i>CH</i>	307-165 N Court	630-2273
MONICA SMITH	<i>M Smith</i>	607-165 N Court	707-0498
Cynthia Gomes	<i>C Gomes</i>	107-165 N Court	630-1305
LORI WATTS	<i>L Watts</i>	102-165 COURT ST	633-1640
Debbie Carmichael	<i>D Carmichael</i>	223 Picton Ave #2	285-5604
Jane Swalwell	<i>Jane Swalwell</i>	301 165 Court St	807 285-0066
Jane Swalwell	<i>Jane Swalwell</i>	165 N. Court #206	8073452953
Bob Gomes	<i>Bob Gomes</i>	165 N. Court # 67	8076303577
SINIKKA SALMI	<i>S Salmi</i>	165 N Court # 509	807 344 5740
Jo Mo. DALLAIRE	<i>Jm Dallaire</i>	603-165 N Court	807 621 4405
IRENE HUMBLY	<i>I Humby</i>	604 N COURT	344-4325
JUDY FOULDS	<i>Judith A. Foulds</i>	605-165 N. Court	345 2683
Janice Northan	<i>Janice Northan</i>	601-165 N. Court	358-6940
FRANCES CANTO	<i>F Canto</i>	606-165 N Court.	577-5155
AGNES KONDOR	<i>A Kondor</i>	609-165 N Court	251-9599
J.F. (Jia) Foulds	<i>J Foulds</i>	605-165-N. COURT.	345-2683
Cynthia Napierda	<i>C Napierda</i>	506-165 N. COURT	630-2233
KAREN JAKOBSEN	<i>Karen Jakobsen</i>	401-165 N. COURT	577-4994
DONNA HILDEN	<i>D Hilden</i>	408-165 N. COURT	683-3261
Elona Santin	<i>Elona Santin</i>	205-165 Court St N	768-1098
Mary Luby	<i>Mary Luby</i>	505-165 N Court	344-7560
Ron MAURO	<i>Ron Mauro</i>	504-165 N Court	356-2264
Anna Mowd	<i>Anna Mowd</i>	504-165 N COURT	807 355 2085