



Committee of the Whole Meeting  
Additional Information

Monday, October 21, 2024, 6:30 p.m.  
S.H. Blake Memorial Auditorium

---

Pages

8. Reports of Municipal Officers

8.4 Temporary Village Initiatives

\*8.4.1 Temporary Village Initiative - Human Rights-Based  
Community Action Plan

3 - 17

Report 395-2024-City Manager's Office-Strategic Initiatives & Engagement providing a recommendation, in response to the growing issue of unsheltered homelessness and encampments, the City of Thunder Bay is recommending a stopgap measure – a Temporary Village (the Village). This initiative is one part of the City's ten-part *Human Rights-Based Community Action Plan for Thunder Bay*, which upholds the dignity and human rights of individuals living in encampments while addressing public health and safety concerns, for Council's consideration.

WITH RESPECT to Report 395-2024 (City Manager's Office – Strategic Initiatives & Engagement), we recommend that the Temporary Village Initiative as outlined in this report be approved with a maximum budget for infrastructure and construction of \$5.0 million, conditional on final site approval by City Council;

AND THAT the Temporary Village Initiative be financed up to \$5.0 million from the Renew Thunder Bay Reserve Fund;

AND THAT any external funding or cost recovery related to the capital cost of the project, reduce the contribution from the Renew Thunder Bay Reserve Fund;

AND THAT Administration include up to \$1.5 million in the 2025 tax-supported operating budget to fund an operator for

the Temporary Village Initiative;

AND THAT Administration conducts further analysis and time-limited consultations on the two proposed site locations and report back to Council with a recommended location and updated cost estimates;

AND THAT should any costs exceed municipal contribution maximums, Administration will report back to seek further direction;

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

# Corporate Report

**REPORT NUMBER** 395-2024-City Manager's Office-Strategic Initiatives & Engagement

**DATE**

**PREPARED**

October 11, 2024

**FILE**

**MEETING DATE**

October 21, 2024

**SUBJECT**

Temporary Village Initiative – Human Rights-Based Community Action Plan

## **RECOMMENDATION**

WITH RESPECT to Report 395-2024 (City Manager’s Office – Strategic Initiatives & Engagement), we recommend that the Temporary Village Initiative as outlined in this report be approved with a maximum budget for infrastructure and construction of \$5.0 million, conditional on final site approval by City Council;

AND THAT the Temporary Village Initiative be financed up to \$5.0 million from the Renew Thunder Bay Reserve Fund;

AND THAT any external funding or cost recovery related to the capital cost of the project, reduce the contribution from the Renew Thunder Bay Reserve Fund;

AND THAT Administration include up to \$1.5 million in the 2025 tax-supported operating budget to fund an operator for the Temporary Village Initiative;

AND THAT Administration conducts further analysis and time-limited consultations on the two proposed site locations and report back to Council with a recommended location and updated cost estimates;

AND THAT should any costs exceed municipal contribution maximums, Administration will report back to seek further direction;

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

## **LINK TO STRATEGIC PLAN**

Within the Maamawe, Growing Together, City of Thunder Bay Strategic Plan 2023-2027:

**Strategic Direction: All Together. We honour the truth and reconcile for the future.**

GOAL: Strengthen the City's relationships with Indigenous communities, leaders and organizations to advance Truth & Reconciliation priorities together.

GOAL: Work toward inclusion, diversity, equity, and respect for all.

**Strategic Direction: Safety and Well-being. Our community is healthy, safe, and strong.**

GOAL: Improve access to supports for priority populations to narrow gaps in equity.

GOAL: Enhance safety and well-being at the community level through climate action and environmental design.

GOAL: Create and maintain strong neighbourhoods and Indigenized spaces where people connect and engage.

Additionally, this work connects with the following City Council approved strategic plans:

**Community Safety & Well-Being Plan**

Priority 2: Housing and Homelessness; Targeted Outcomes: Reduce Indigenous homelessness by 50 percent by 2027; Increase transitional and supportive housing opportunities in Thunder Bay

**Indigenous Relations & Inclusion Strategy**

Pillar 1: Respectful relations; 2. Honour & foster relations with Fort William First Nation, Metis, and local Indigenous Partners

Pillar 2: Responsive city; 5. Inclusive research & policy development

Pillar 4: Community prosperity; 9. Provide guidance to make City services responsive to needs of Indigenous Peoples; 10. Improve outreach & communications on City services; 11. Advocate & work with governments & local partners to improve outcomes

**Thunder Bay Drug Strategy**

Housing Pillar: Advocating for more supportive housing for people with complex needs; Contributing to the understanding of homelessness in Canada.

**EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

In response to the growing issue of unsheltered homelessness and encampments, the City of Thunder Bay is recommending a stopgap measure – a Temporary Village (the Village). This initiative is one part of the City's ten-part *Human Rights-Based Community Action Plan for Thunder Bay*, which upholds the dignity and human rights of individuals living in encampments while addressing public health and safety concerns.

This initiative offers an interim solution while further gains in housing stock are realized by the District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) and other community organizations. The Village will provide dignified sheltering spaces, access to supports and services, and offer residents a pathway out of homelessness.

The Temporary Village is a rapid response measure to the current encampment crisis and not a substitute for long-term housing strategies.

The project will be rolled out in five phases:

1. Site Selection and Design
2. Units and Services Procurement
3. Construction and Installation
4. Implementation, Evaluation, and Public Communication
5. Exit and Transition of Public Assets

Administration has identified two potential sites: 1) 114 Miles St E, supporting up to 80 units with an estimated \$4 - \$4.3 million infrastructure and construction investment. 2) Kam River Heritage Park, supporting up to 100 units with an estimated \$5.9 - \$6.8 million infrastructure and construction investment. To provide Council with an appropriate site recommendation, Administration needs to continue exploring cost savings measures and undertake time-limited consultation efforts. Administration will return to Council as early as possible with a final site recommendation.

The City's overall upfront contribution to construction and infrastructure investments will be capped at \$5.0 million. Regardless of site selection, municipal contributions for operating costs will be capped at \$1.5 million annually. The City will pursue cost recoveries from provincial and federal programs, local charities and foundations, and other funding opportunities. Administration has confidence that funding will be made available through the province and/or the federal government since the City has a compelling argument for such funding, with a human rights-based and pragmatic approach.

## ***DISCUSSION***

### **Temporary Village Initiative**

The City of Thunder Bay, like many municipalities across Ontario, continues to experience a concerning rise in unsheltered homelessness and encampments. In response, the City has developed a comprehensive ten-part *Human Rights-Based Community Action Plan* (the Plan). The Plan aims to uphold the dignity and human rights of individuals living in encampments, while addressing broader community concerns, including public health and safety risks.

Without the Temporary Village, the City would be left to maintain status quo in a community that lacks enough viable indoor options to effectively reduce the number of encampments. This would result in continued, and likely escalating, expenditures on sanitation and waste management to address public health risks and environmental impacts. The City would also still need to commit the financial resources identified in 2025 budget to monitor and manage encampments. This would provide limited long-

term benefits without the implementation of the whole ten-part *Human Rights-Based Community Action Plan*.

Therefore, the Village is the cornerstone of the broader Plan. It represents an innovative rapid-response and stopgap measure for managing encampments. Although the City is not the Service System Manager nor directly responsible for any forms of social, transitional, or supportive housing, there is a duty to care for all residents and a responsibility to manage public spaces, which is where encampments are most often located. The TBDSSAB, who is the Service System Manager, is actively working to increase transitional, supportive, and social housing stock but this process takes time. In the interim, the City recognizes the need for a stopgap measure.

Providing the proposed Temporary Village allows the City to better manage the existing encampments in our public spaces. The law in Ontario is developing and, in general terms, a municipality's ability to impose rules or guidelines on encampments is severely restricted, if there are not sufficient, fully accessible, *indoor* shelter options.

The TBDSSAB, who is the Service System Manager, is actively working to increase transitional, supportive, and social housing stock but this process takes time. In the interim, the City recognizes the need for a stopgap measure.

The Temporary Village is not intended to replace the critical housing efforts of the TBDSSAB and other community partners. Rather, it serves as an interim measure to provide individuals with a more dignified and supported sheltering space until appropriate, stable housing is available. The temporary nature of the Village is closely linked to the increase in housing stock, as the model relies on the availability of stable housing options to support people in exiting homelessness. By offering a structured environment with wrap-around services, the Village goes beyond providing basic shelter. It provides residents with stability and a pathway out of homelessness. Without such initiatives, the encampment crisis is likely to continue escalating.

### **What is a Temporary Village?**

Temporary Villages are:

- Short-term, sheltering initiatives designed to provide immediate indoor spaces to individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness. They typically consist of prefabricated or modular units that offer privacy, power, heating, and cooling.
- Managed and structured environments that provide a dignified and stable alternative to encampments. They typically provide on-site hygiene and laundry facilities and include security and safety measures such as fencing and on-site security personnel.
- Secure and dignified living accommodations with on-site staff who provide wrap-around supports and services and help people transition out of homelessness by facilitating access to key supports and services.

Temporary Villages are not:

- The same as encampments. Unlike encampments, Temporary Villages are organized, staffed, and designed to ensure dignity, security, and stability for residents.
- Permanent housing solutions. They are temporary in nature and carry the expectation that residents will transition to stable housing as soon as appropriate options are available.
- A substitute for long-term housing strategies. The Temporary Village is a stopgap measure to address the immediate crisis while more transitional, supportive, and social housing solutions are developed and constructed.

### **Success Stories from Other Communities**

Similar initiatives have demonstrated success in several North American communities. These examples provide valuable insights into the potential positive impact of this approach. This section highlights examples from Kitchener, Vancouver (USA), and Peterborough, showcasing both measurable outcomes and testimonials from residents and community leaders.

#### **1. [A Better Tent City](#) – Kitchener, Ontario**

A Better Tent City (ABTC) opened in 2020 in Kitchener, Ontario. ABTC is a managed community, providing 42 insulated cabins with electricity, heating, shared washrooms and showers, and a common kitchen for individuals experiencing homelessness.

A June 2024 report, [“A Place to Find Community”: Findings from the A Better Tent City Survey](#), found that ABTC has had overwhelmingly positive impacts on the well-being of residents. Key findings include:

- 71% of respondents reported improvements in physical and mental health.
- 76% of respondents noted better living conditions, including access to essential resources like food and shelter.
- 75% of respondents reported improved social connections, demonstrating a sense of community at the site.

One resident expressed the significance of ABTC, stating: "If it wasn't for this place, I wouldn't be here today. I wouldn't have survived outside in the winter."

#### **2. [Safe Stay Communities](#) – Vancouver, Washington USA**

[Hope Village](#), one of Vancouver, Washington's Safe Stay Communities, celebrated its second anniversary in April 2024. Safe Stay Communities consist of [Pallet Shelter Villages](#) and provide safe, stable shelter and access to supportive services aimed at helping residents exit homelessness.

An April 2023 report, [A Safe Stay, A Hopeful Future](#), highlights Hope Village's success in providing stability, connecting residents to essential services, and supporting individuals in exiting homelessness. Key findings include:

- 8,895 meals served on site; 109 substance use recovery meetings attended; 90 healthcare appointments attended; 66 active employment searches (resumes and/or job interviews) with 8 secured employments; 17 legal identifications obtained; and 10 family reunifications.
- From April 2022 to April 2023, Hope Village served 53 residents, with 14 individuals successfully transitioning to stable housing.
- The average length of stay prior to securing housing was 147 days.

According to [Jamie Spinelli](#), Vancouver's homeless response manager: "This program has pulled a lot of people off the streets and given them a safer place to live and transition out of homelessness. It's also provided relief for the community by reducing camping in the area."

### **3. [Modular Bridge Housing Community](#) – Peterborough, Ontario**

The Modular Bridge Housing Community (MBHC) in Peterborough consists of 50 modular units, a washroom and shower facility, and a service hub for support agencies. It has proven to be highly successful, providing critical support to individuals experiencing chronic homelessness while improving public safety and broader community concerns.

A September 2024 report, [Modular Bridge Housing Community Next Steps, Report CSSS24-018](#), identifies key achievements from the first seven months of operations:

- The site operator has made 121 referrals to community supports, including healthcare, mental health services, and employment programs.
- 11 residents are now ready to transition to permanent housing, and 1 individual has already moved into a stable home.
- Prior to the MBHC, the site was home to a 75-person encampment that generated frequent police calls. Since the MBHC opened, police calls related to the site have dropped by 96%, from 95 calls during the encampment period to just 4 calls during the first seven months of the MBHC.
- In a neighborhood survey, 6 out of 7 respondents reported feeling safer, and the same number noted an overall positive impact from the MBHC, with several highlighting a reduction in noise and improved cleanliness.

The project has also gained national attention, earning the [PJ Marshall Innovation Award](#) from the Association of Municipalities of Ontario, further validating its success.

These success stories demonstrate that temporary village initiatives, when combined with strong management and wrap-around services, can significantly improve the lives



of individuals experiencing unsheltered homelessness while addressing broader community concerns.

### **Project Phases**

The Village will be completed in five phases, each with key activities designed to support a successful and timely implementation. The phases include site design; units and services procurement, construction and installation; implementation, evaluation and public communication; and exit and transition of public assets.

Project phases may be adjusted as needed to ensure timely completion of the work and maximize cost savings.

#### **Phase One: Site Design**

This phase includes acquiring architectural design services to confirm the best layout for the Village in compliance with the Ontario Building Code, and designing the site servicing.

This phase may also include the installation of the initial site infrastructure and preparation work, such as grading, drainage, and clearing (if required). The timing of this work will depend on project timelines and cost mitigation strategies.

#### **Phase Two: Units and Services Procurement**

This phase has three main objectives: acquire units, secure construction services, and select an operator to manage the Village. The information below describes high-level expectations for each objective.

- 1. Unit Acquisition:** Units will be required to have CSA/ESA and Intertek certifications or engineered equivalencies for building permits and inspections, withstand environmental factors like snow load and strong winds, and include safety features like smoke alarms and carbon monoxide detectors. Durability and ease of maintenance are also key considerations. Additionally, the sheltering units must be equipped with power, heating, and cooling systems. Sheltering units will not have kitchens or cooking facilities, nor will they have their own washrooms. Standalone, separate hygiene and laundry units are required.
- 2. Construction Services:** This will involve infrastructure servicing and site preparation, including final grading, fencing, drainage, and lighting installation, as well as sewer and water connections to hygiene and laundry units, and electrical connections for all units. Contractors will be responsible to manage the installation of these services, ensuring they are properly completed for each unit on-site, fully functional and compliant with applicable codes and standards.
- 3. Operator:** The operator is expected to be a service provider with experience in sheltering/housing populations with complex needs or an operator who can

obtain such expertise through sub-contracting. The operator must demonstrate a clear plan for managing the Village, including a focus on transitioning residents into stable housing. Sobriety will not be a requirement for admission. The operator's responsibilities will include site maintenance (e.g., snow removal), managing a food program, and sourcing security personnel. Administration will host sessions with community partners and individuals with lived experience to ensure the Village's operational model meets the population's needs. The operator must also commit to engaging in data sharing and evaluation processes.

### **Phase Three: Construction and Installation**

This phase includes the completion of the site infrastructure requirements (water, sanitary and electrical services) as well as site improvements. Improvements include assembling units, installing fencing, clearing (as required), drainage, and final grading of the site. Installation of lighting, connecting hygiene and laundry units to sewer and water, and connecting units to electrical source are also part of this phase.

Final inspections will take place in this phase to ensure that all work complies with safety and building regulations. Throughout this phase, Administration will work closely with the selected contractor(s) to ensure the project is carried out in a timely fashion.

### **Phase Four: Implementation, Evaluation and Public Communication**

Once construction is completed and the Village becomes operational, Administration will transition into supporting the selected operator. This phase includes regular monitoring and check-ins with the operator to ensure that the Village is running effectively and that residents are receiving the necessary support services.

An evaluation plan will be established, potentially in collaboration with post-secondary institutions or research institutes. The evaluation will focus on key performance indicators, such as move-in rates, the number of individuals who transition from unsheltered homelessness to temporary units, and the number who subsequently move into stable housing.

A robust and ongoing public communication campaign will be created and launched to ensure transparency and keep the community informed about the Village's progress and impact. This campaign will highlight key milestones, share success stories, and be responsive to community concerns. The goal is to build public support by showcasing the Village's positive outcomes and reinforcing the City's commitment to a human-rights based approach.

### **Phase Five: Exit and Transition of Public Assets**

The Temporary Village is intended as an interim measure while housing solutions are developed. The operator will work closely with the TBDSSAB and other housing

providers to ensure that residents are transitioned into stable, appropriate housing as it becomes available. Once the need for the Village diminishes, the City will explore cost efficient ways to divest the units and repurpose the site.

### **Site Location**

The Village's location is critical to its success. The site must be close to services frequented by people experiencing unsheltered homelessness and public transportation. It is therefore important for the Village to be located near or within a downtown core where many essential services are located.

Community concerns about Temporary Villages are acknowledged, and it is important to highlight that Temporary Villages offer a much higher degree of public safety compared to encampments, as they are fenced, managed by on-site staff, and provide a level of stability to village residents they do not experience when living unsheltered.

Results from [previous public consultations](#) in April 2024 regarding the feasibility of designated encampment locations further supports the Village. Among 1,209 respondents, 56% agreed with using City-owned land for designated encampments, with 82% supporting the use of vacant lots and 48% supporting the use of parks without active programming. While the Village and designated encampments are not identical, both serve as managed spaces aimed at addressing unsheltered homelessness. Due to these similarities, it is reasonable to extrapolate that the support for designated encampments would extend to the Village as a more organized and secure solution. Additionally, 53% of those in favour of designated encampments expressed willingness to cover associated costs through the City's yearly tax-supported budget, suggesting potential public backing for funding the Village as well.

### **Options**

Administration has identified two options for the Village's location, along with preliminary cost estimates. To provide Council with an appropriate site recommendation, Administration needs to continue exploring cost savings measures and undertake time-limited consultation efforts. In the interim, Council can approve the Village's concept. Once these efforts are complete, Administration will return to Council as early as possible and seek approval for the final site recommendation. Estimated costs outlined below do not include cold weather construction which could add 30% to impacted estimates.

Administration recognizes that Option #2 is currently above the self-imposed financial cap. Administration nonetheless wishes to further explore this option with a view to reducing costs since the advantages to this location are significant.

**Option 1: 114 Miles St E – Up to 80 Units**

| Infrastructure & Capital Cost Estimate |                              |
|--|------------------------------|
| Infrastructure                         | \$1.0 - \$1.3 million        |
| Capital                                | \$3.0 million                |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                           | <b>\$4.0 - \$4.3 million</b> |
| Operating Cost Estimate                |                              |
| Total Operating (annual)               | \$1.5 - \$2.0 million        |

| Site Considerations   |   |
|---|---|
| <p><b>Summary:</b> This cost-effective option can support up to 80 units, aligns with budget constraints, and offers a realistic pathway for implementation. Nearby existing services means faster implementation and lower servicing costs. The site is close to key supports and services.</p>  |   |
| Strengths   | Limitations   |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Services are nearby so servicing is less expensive and will take less time.</li> <li>• Costs are within identified budget constraints.</li> <li>• Less site preparation required.</li> <li>• Some public visibility, which may increase public awareness and understanding of the model.</li> <li>• Emergency Shelter use is permitted at this location which is the Downtown Neighbourhood Zone.</li> <li>• No railroad or railyard in close proximity.</li> <li>• Compact site more manageable for operator and lower operating costs.</li> <li>• Permanent servicing supports future development opportunities.</li> <li>• Very close to services and public transportation.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Public communication and education efforts can mitigate potential opposition to downtown site.</li> <li>• Less capacity for units.</li> <li>• New location, not historically where people have been living.</li> </ul> |

**Option 2: Kam River Heritage Park – Up to 100 Units**

| <b>Infrastructure &amp; Capital Cost Estimate</b> |                              |
|---|------------------------------|
| Infrastructure                                    | \$2.3 - \$3.2 million        |
| Capital   | \$3.6 million                |
| <b>TOTAL</b>                                      | <b>\$5.9 - \$6.8 million</b> |
| <b>Operating Cost Estimate</b>                    |                              |
| Total Operating (annual)                          | \$1.5 - \$2.5 million        |

| <b>Site Considerations</b>   |   |
|--|---|
| <p><b>Summary:</b> The Kam River Heritage Park offers a larger site that could accommodate up to 100 units and the potential for permanent upgrades to support future park revitalization efforts. However, this option carries higher costs and timely implementation challenges.</p>   |   |
| <b>Strengths</b>   | <b>Limitations</b>  |
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Higher capacity for units – potential to support up to 100 units.</li> <li>• Permanent infrastructure improvements could support future revitalization efforts at Kam River Heritage Park.</li> <li>• Potential for less community opposition.</li> <li>• Eye on the Street Program camera pre-approved to be installed nearby.</li> <li>• In reasonable proximity to services and public transportation.</li> <li>• Location where people have historically been living in an encampment.</li> </ul> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• High costs, exceeding budget constraints for infrastructure services.</li> <li>• Site preparation and servicing requirements are more extensive.</li> <li>• Location where people are currently living – need to relocate current encampment residents.</li> <li>• One of the only waterfront parks on the South side, may lead to some community pushback.</li> <li>• Sprawling site more difficult for operator to manage.</li> <li>• Operating costs may exceed municipal contribution maximum, requiring sourcing of additional funds.</li> <li>• Proximity to railroad and associated sound concerns.</li> <li>• Hidden location lends to further stigmatization.</li> <li>• Part of the site is within the Lakehead Region Conservation Authority regulated area, consultation with their office will be needed for any development proposed within their jurisdiction.</li> </ul> |

**CONSULTATION**

To support the identification of an appropriate site for the Temporary Village, a series of time-limited consultations are planned. These consultations aim to gather feedback from key stakeholders, inform the public about the initiative, and give the opportunity to address any concerns that may arise. The following consultation methods will be employed:

- 1. **Public Survey:** A public survey will be made available online for all residents of the City of Thunder Bay. Physical copies will also be available at the Thunder Bay Public Library branches and City Hall to ensure inclusivity for residents who may have limited internet access. The survey will be open for one week.
- 2. **Pamphlets for Surrounding Businesses & Residences:** Informational pamphlets will be created and distributed to businesses and residences located near potential sites. These pamphlets will provide key details about the project and include an invitation to a drop-in engagement session, where surrounding residents and business owners can voice their thoughts, ask questions, and offer feedback in person.
- 3. **Targeted Engagement Session with the Fort William Business Improvement Association (BIA):** A dedicated engagement session will be held with the Fort William BIA Board. This session will focus on understanding the specific concerns and interests of businesses within the area and ensuring their perspectives are considered during the site identification process.

**FINANCIAL IMPLICATION**

The Temporary Village Initiative requires upfront investments, up to a maximum of \$5.0 million for infrastructure and construction costs. Currently, municipal funding is the only suitable financing source available to fund the Village.

The Renew Thunder Bay Reserve Fund could be a suitable source of financing considering the legacy impact of the current unsheltered homelessness crisis in the City of Thunder Bay, especially if the City is able to leverage federal and provincial funding, reducing the required reserve fund contribution. The current uncommitted balance of the Renew Thunder Bay Reserve Fund is approximately \$9.7 million. Several 2025 capital project budgets have been developed with requested financing from the Renew Thunder Bay Reserve Fund totalling \$4.3 million. A \$5.0 million commitment towards the Temporary Village would leave a \$0.4 million uncommitted balance in the Renew Thunder Bay Reserve Fund.

The Renew Thunder Bay Reserve Fund would be replenished as Housing Accelerator Funds (up to \$4.06 million) are received in 2025 and 2026, as well as any external funding that is received for the Temporary Village project. Administration is confident

that cost recoveries are likely to be achieved through federal and provincial programs, such as the [Unsheltered Homelessness and Encampments Initiative](#), [Reaching Home Program](#), and the [Homelessness Prevention Program](#), as well as from local charities, foundations, grants, and sponsorship opportunities, as the Temporary Village aligns with a human rights-based and pragmatic approach to addressing unsheltered homelessness.

Operating costs for the Temporary Village are not yet determined, but municipal contributions will be capped at \$1.5 million per year. Administration would pursue external funding to support this initiative however pending any approval, the financial impact would be included in the 2025 tax-supported budget.

If any of the budget caps for infrastructure, construction, or operating costs become unworkable due to unforeseen circumstances or cost escalations, Administration will return to Council for further direction.

### **CONCLUSION**

The outlined Temporary Village Initiative will offer people experiencing unsheltered homelessness a dignified and stable indoor shelter option. By providing wrap-around supports and a secure, staffed, and structured environment, the Village will help residents transition out of homelessness and into stable housing. The Village also helps to address public concerns with encampments, including public health and safety risks.

The project's five phase plan provides a clear path to implementation. Administration has identified two potential sites. A final site recommendation will be brought to Council following a series of public consultations and further staff analyses. The City will pursue external funding opportunities from various sources to minimize financial strain on its budget.

Overall, this project offers a thoughtful, temporary solution while long-term housing developments are underway and positions the City of Thunder Bay as a model for other municipalities facing similar challenges. It is Administration's recommendation that Council approve this initiative, conditional on Council's approval of the recommended site.

### **BACKGROUND**

June 27, 2022, Memorandum from C. Olsen, Manager – Community Strategies, was presented at Committee of the Whole on June 27, 2022, requesting an opportunity to provide an update relative to the ongoing collaborative approach responding to unsheltered homelessness in the community. Executive Director Holly Gauvin -Elevate NWO, and Staff Sergeant Jason Anderson – Community Outreach - Thunder Bay Police Service provided an overview relative to the above noted and responded to questions.

August 8, 2022, Memorandum from C. Olsen, Manager – Community Strategies, was presented to Committee of the Whole and a resolution was passed, and ratified at City Council on August 22, 2022 that approved the financial support for an Unsheltered Homelessness Pilot Project, maintaining peer involvement and appropriate amenities provided to Elevate NWO and authorized the General Manager of Development and Emergency Services and the City Clerk to execute necessary documents.

February 13, 2023, Susan Lester and Jeanne Adams appeared before Committee of the Whole and provided a PowerPoint presentation, relative to encampments on the McVicar Creek Recreational Trail, and responded to questions.

May 1, 2023, City Council ratified a resolution to adopt a human-rights based approach to responding to encampments, including a \$20,000 expansion in the Operating Budget for 2024, and directing Administration conduct community consultation to better understand the feasibility of designated/supported encampments, and to work with the Intergovernmental Affairs Committee to advocate to the provincial government.

September 25, 2023, Memorandum from C. Olsen, Acting Director – Strategic Initiatives & Engagement, was presented to Committee of the Whole and provided an update on the response to unsheltered homelessness, including preparations for the upcoming winter months.

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.

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.

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.

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.



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.

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.

***REFERENCE MATERIAL ATTACHED***

None.

***REPORT PREPARED BY***

Rilee Willianen, Drug Strategy Specialist – City Manager’s Office

***REPORT SIGNED AND VERIFIED BY***

John Collin, City Manager

Date (10/17/2024)