

September 27, 2024
Mayor and Council
City of Thunder Bay
500 Donald St. East
Thunder Bay, ON
P7E 5K4

Subject: Letter of Support for the Municipality's Human Rights-Based Community Action Plan to Address Encampments

Dear Mayor and Council,

On behalf of the Thunder Bay and District Mental Health and Addictions Network (TBDMHAN), we are writing to express our full support for the City's comprehensive Human Rights-Based Community Action Plan to address encampments. This initiative represents a crucial and well-structured approach to addressing the pressing challenges of unsheltered homelessness in our community and aligns with our Network's shared commitment to fostering safety, well-being, and dignity for all residents.

We strongly endorse the key components of the plan, including:

- **Permissible Encampment Areas** that provide essential services in controlled environments, which will greatly reduce strain on community resources and improve conditions for encampment residents.
- **Temporary Village Sheltering Units** that offer not only immediate indoor sheltering, but also the wrap-around services necessary to help individuals stabilize and transition to long-term solutions.
- **Specialized Encampment Management Team** that will ensure timely responses to community concerns, coordinate sanitation services, and maintain safe conditions.
- **Advocacy to Provincial and Federal Governments** to secure the funding and policy changes needed to address homelessness in a sustainable way.
- **Integration of Lived Experience Voices**, ensuring that the decisions made are rooted in the real-life experiences of those directly affected by unsheltered homelessness.

The TBDMHAN supports the municipality's commitment to collaboratively work with community partners. We believe that by uniting our resources, expertise, and services, we can achieve meaningful and lasting change. Our member organizations stand ready to contribute to the efforts of this plan through healthcare services, housing support, mental health support, substance use health support, outreach, and other resources or expertise.

The innovative and comprehensive nature of this plan sets a strong foundation for a coordinated response to homelessness and encampments, one that prioritizes compassion, efficiency, and long-term success. We believe this initiative will not only improve outcomes for individuals experiencing homelessness but also enhance the overall well-being of our community.

In full support of this plan, we look forward to working alongside the municipality to ensure its successful implementation.

Sincerely,



Nancy Chamberlain, Co-Chair
CEO of Thunder Bay Counselling



Diane Walker, Co-Chair
CEO of Children's Centre Thunder Bay

Thunder Bay and District Mental Health and Addictions Network (TBDMHAN)

Membership list:

Alpha Court Community Health and Addiction Services

Brain Injury Services of Northern Ontario

Canadian Mental Health Association, Thunder Bay Branch

Children's Centre Thunder Bay

Crossroads Centre

Dilico Anishinabek Family Care

Elizabeth Fry Society of Northwestern Ontario

Hospice Northwest

Nipigon District Memorial Hospital

North of Superior Counselling Programs

North Shore Family Health Team

NorWest Community Health Centres

People Advocating for Change Through Empowerment (PACE)

St. Joseph's Care Group

Thunder Bay Counselling

Thunder Bay District Health Unit

Thunder Bay District Social Services Administration Board

Thunder Bay Drug Strategy

Thunder Bay Indigenous Friendship Centre

Thunder Bay Regional Health Sciences Centre