

## **Appendix B – Detailed Survey Results**

A survey was conducted to further support a broad and comprehensive reassessment of alternative locations for the Village. It sought community input on the Village's anticipated benefits and invited respondents to suggest potential locations. Additionally, the survey provided an opportunity for participants to share open-ended feedback. Responses with less than 10 responses are not reported to ensure that reported findings reflect meaningful trends rather than isolated opinions.

### **Methods**

The survey was open from December 2, 2024, to January 15, 2025, and received a total of 473 responses – 469 electronic submissions and 4 hard copy submissions. The survey collected qualitative data through three open-ended questions:

1. How do you think a temporary shelter village will benefit our community?
2. Where in Thunder Bay do you think the temporary shelter village should be located?
3. Do you have any other feedback?

To complement the survey, the Get Involved webpage featured an interactive map tool that allowed registrants to drop a pin and provide comments on their suggestion. A total of 43 responses were submitted through this feature. Some registrants submitted multiples responses and some also participated in the survey.

Given the open-ended nature of the questions, respondents often provided multiple viewpoints within a single response. As a result, responses were coded into multiple thematic categories where applicable. Consequently, any reported percentages reflect the frequency of themes mentioned rather than a direct proportion of respondents.

### **Limitations**

Although this survey serves as an important feedback mechanism, it was self-directed rather than a random sample of the population; in this case, the results are not statistically significant and cannot be extrapolated to the entire population of the City of Thunder Bay without a without a large margin of error. Results must be understood as the opinions of the respondents of this survey and should not be generalized to the broader community.

### **Key Findings**

Overall, key themes emerged but there was a significant degree of variation between responses. While some respondents viewed the initiative as a positive step toward addressing homelessness, others expressed skepticism about its effectiveness or raised questions about funding and the order of government responsible for addressing homelessness, including encampments. These diverse perspectives highlight the

complexity of the issue and the importance of ongoing community engagement and education.

### ***1. How do you think a temporary shelter village will benefit our community?***

A total of 473 responses provided a range of perspectives on both the potential benefits and concerns regarding the Village.

#### Key Benefits Identified

Many respondents saw the Village as a valuable and compassionate approach to addressing encampments. The most frequently mentioned benefits include:

- 129 responses (27%) emphasized the importance of offering a secure, warm, and dignified living space for individuals experiencing homelessness
- 86 responses (18%) highlighted how the Village could connect residents with mental health, addiction support, employment assistance, and other essential services
- 75 responses (16%) noted the Village could provide stability and structure, improving the overall well-being of its residents
- 63 responses (13%) felt that the Village would help reduce or eliminate encampments, offering a structured alternative
- 58 responses (12%) believed it would improve cleanliness in public spaces, addressing waste and sanitation concerns
- 48 responses (10%) highlighted the Village's role in improving public safety and reducing public health risks, such as exposure to extreme weather and the spread of disease
- 46 responses (10%) viewed the Village as a stepping stone to long-term housing, giving people a chance to stabilize before moving into permanent accommodations
- 35 responses (7%) mentioned that it could foster a sense of community and belonging among residents
- 27 responses (6%) emphasized that it could prevent deaths, particularly in cold weather
- 26 responses (6%) believed the initiative would alleviate pressure on emergency services, reducing the burden on paramedics, hospitals, and police
- 10 responses (2%) noted that it could improve the capacity of service providers to support those in need more effectively

#### Concerns and Alternative Perspectives

While many supported the initiative, some responses noted concerns:

- 127 responses (27%) stated they did not perceive any benefit from the initiative
- 25 responses (5%) worried that the Village would become a permanent fixture, rather than a short-term response

- 25 responses (5%) felt that this was not the right solution to encampments
- 24 responses (5%) argued that homelessness is not a municipal responsibility and should be handled by other orders of government
- 13 responses (3%) suggested that funds should be redirected to permanent housing solutions instead
- 13 responses (3%) were unsure of the benefits
- 11 responses (2%) raised concerns about the cost and how it would impact municipal budgets

## ***2. Where in Thunder Bay do you think the temporary shelter village should be located?***

In addition to the survey (473 responses), input was also gathered using an interactive mapping tool (43 responses), resulting in a total of 516 responses analyzed thematically. The feedback revealed a wide range of perspectives, with some responses identifying specific sites, others suggesting general areas, and some expressing opposition to the project altogether.

### Geographic Distribution of Site Suggestions

Responses related to site suggestions were distributed across different areas of the city, with varying levels of support for different areas:

- 186 responses (36%) suggested areas or locations in the South side
- 134 responses (25%) suggested areas or locations in the North side
- 52 responses (10%) suggested centrally located areas or sites

### Specific Site Suggestions

Among the 257 respondents (50%) who identified specific sites, the most frequently mentioned locations were:

- 114 Miles Street E – 71 responses (28%)
- Former Lakehead Psychiatric Hospital (LPH) grounds – 48 responses (19%)
- Kam River Park – 37 responses (14%)
- Current River Park – 16 responses (6%)

Common reasonings for suggesting these locations included their large surface area, proximity to supportive services, or historical use for similar purposes.

### Area Specific Suggestions

97 respondents (21%) did not name specific sites but instead suggested general areas where the Village could be located. The most commonly suggested areas include:

- Downtown Fort William – 23 responses (24%)

- Simpson Street area – 23 responses (24%)
- Cumberland Street area – 13 responses (13%)

### Opposition and Alternative Approaches

While many respondents proposed locations, some were opposed to the Village or suggested alternative approaches:

- 59 responses (11%) explicitly stated that the Village should not be built anywhere
- 35 responses (7%) suggested that the Village should be housed inside an existing building rather than in an outdoor location
- 16 responses (3%) were unsure or had no preference

### Considerations for Location Selection

Beyond identifying potential locations, respondents also highlighted several key factors that should guide the final site selection:

- 124 responses (24%) emphasized the importance of proximity to supportive services and public transit
- 61 responses (12%) expressed concerns about locating the Village near parks, schools, daycares, or residential neighborhoods
- 39 responses (8%) suggested avoiding locations near businesses and tourism areas

### **3. Any other feedback?**

Due to the open-ended nature of this question, responses covered a wide range of perspectives and concerns. This is unlike the previous questions where feedback could be more directly categorized. As a result, this section provides a general summary of key themes that emerged.

- **Divided Opinion** – Responses demonstrate a division in opinion regarding the Village and the broader approach taken by Council and Administration. Supporters see the Village as a necessary, life-saving intervention that provides stability, dignity, and access to essential services. Opponents, however, view the Village as a “hand-out” and perceive the Village will lead to an increase in homelessness and public health and safety issues.
- **Urgency & Implementation Delays** – Some respondents expressed frustration with implementation delays and urged the City to act swiftly in selecting a site. Some respondents also expressed frustration that the previously recommended site was rejected. Concerns about worsening winter conditions, encampment safety hazards, and recent deaths were cited as pressing reasons for immediate action.

- **Concerns About the Temporary Nature** – There were concerns regarding the Village’s temporary nature. Some respondents feared the Village would not be temporary and pointed to past instances where temporary projects evolved into permanent fixtures. Other respondents had the opposite viewpoint and expressed the Village should be a permanent solution.
- **Alternative Approaches** – Respondents proposed alternatives to constructing new temporary shelters. Suggestions included repurposing vacant buildings (such as motels), expanding existing emergency shelters, and redirecting funds to established housing services organizations.
- **Financial Considerations** – Some respondents voiced outright opposition to using municipal dollars to fund the project, while other respondents opposed funding the project unless the project received federal or provincial contributions. Some respondents expressed support for adding funding to the budget to better support individuals.
- **Safety and Security** – Public safety concerns were raised, with some respondents fearing potential increases in theft, drug-related activity, and vandalism. Suggestions to increase security measures, including 24/7 on-site security and police presence, were provided. However, some respondents believed that a well-managed Village could enhance safety compared to unmanaged encampments.
- **Access & Residency Considerations** – Some respondents suggested prioritizing long-term Thunder Bay residents for the Village. There were also suggestions for requiring residents to participate in addiction treatment, work programs or life skills training. Concerns about cleanliness, behavior, and rule enforcement were noted, with some suggesting consequences such as eviction for repeated violations.
- **Broader Policy & Systemic Issues** – Several respondents highlighted that homelessness is a symptom of larger policy failures and systemic issues, including the lack of affordable housing and gaps in mental health and addiction services. These responses typically advocated for increased investment in permanent supportive housing and expanded addiction treatment programs to address root causes.