



## Memorandum

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**TO:** Krista Power, Director of Legislative Services & City Clerk      **FILE:**

**FROM:** John Collin, City Manager

**DATE:** 09/08/2025 (mm/dd/yyyy)

**SUBJECT:** Notice of Motion – Rescind - Temporary Village Initiatives – Human Rights-Based Community Action Plan – Hillyard location – Additional information

**MEETING & DATE:** City Council – 09/16/2025 (mm/dd/yyyy)

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In accordance with the Procedural Rules of City Council, City Council will be considering the Notice of Motion to Rescind the ratified resolution relative to the Hillyard Site location at the September 16, 2025 meeting of Council. The ratified resolution up for debate and decision is relative to Report 239-2025 Report Back - Temporary Shelter Village Initiative - Alternate Locations, as amended and passed by City Council at the July 21, 2025 meeting.

Within the above noted report and approved resolution of City Council, Administration remains committed to completing the work to establish a Temporary Village at the Hillyard Site (the Village) but has paused any further effort on this file until the Notice of Motion to Rescind is resolved. By resolution, Administration is required to report any “significant barriers” to this site. At this time, Administration does not have any such barriers. However, there are challenges, as outlined within this memorandum, that must be highlighted to help better inform City Council in its decision.

### **Community Feedback**

Following the ratified decision of Council to proceed with the Hillyard Site, significant input was received from the community through: a ‘town hall’ for surrounding area

business owners scheduled by Administration and the Chamber of Commerce on 7 August 2025; meetings with business leaders by members of Administration including with the City Manager; and a variety of emails and others correspondence (all of which were forwarded to members of Council).

The community objections to the site can be summarized into five areas:

1. Lack of public consultation prior to the decision;
2. Concern about elevated criminal activity;
3. Concern about elevated situations of vagrancy and associated challenges;
4. Concern that tent encampments will develop in the area surrounding the temporary village; and
5. Potential pause or elimination of commercial investment in the area because of the above concerns – thereby impacting the City's growth objectives.

Administration has little comment on #1. Since ratification, Administration has been fully receptive to feedback and has attempted to inform the public and answer their questions. Should the decision be to proceed with Hillyard, Administration would continue its public consultation to inform and answer questions, including possible mitigation measures to ease community concerns in the immediate area.

For #2, although the concern is recognized, there is no evidence from other sites in other cities that would suggest this to be true. In fact, an examination of other sites shows that criminal activity has lessened or remained constant in most locations. In the few locations where criminal activity has increased, it has done so at a rate slower than the remainder of the city in question.

For #3, there have been some examples of increased vagrancy in locations where sufficient initiatives to address this were not in place. The 10-Part Plan has the necessary measures to remove the risk of vagrancy and Administration recognizes the best practice of treating this as a priority.

For #4, the 10-Part Plan and Administration's comments to Council in Open session have repeatedly affirmed that Administration would not recommend allowable tent encampment sites in proximity to the Village. Additionally, no tent encampments will be permitted in the surrounding area. The Encampment Response Team will monitor the area and support voluntary relocations. For individuals unwilling to voluntarily relocate, 'Trespass Notices' will be strictly enforced provided there is alternative accessible indoor shelter space available.

For #5, clearly, based on the comments received, several businesses in the area have indicated that they may pause, delay or cancel future investment in growth. This is

based on their perception of the risks. Although Administration does not support their evaluation of the risks since the evidence and lessons learned would indicate otherwise, perception can be important to these businesses. The perception of risk itself - even absent actual negative impacts - can influence business confidence. Perceived impacts can be mitigated through site design, security, and service protocols. Administration remains committed to working with the community to develop necessary mitigation measures/strategies. However, businesses will likely remain concerned about safety, customer confidence, and the overall attractiveness of the area. Administration advises that while the Hillyard site remains viable for the Village, the area businesses and residents are very concerned.

### **Timeline**

The Province's confirmation of a reasonable extension to funding timelines provides Council with some flexibility. However, any delay must be viewed as reasonable by the Province.

There are other considerations with respect to the timeline:

1. Even if Hillyard remains as the selected site, having partial occupancy by year-end is now unlikely due to the ongoing pause and pending decision of Council. Partial occupancy in the first few months of 2026 may still be possible.
2. Rescinding the decision on Hillyard means that any new site would not be determined for at least 60 days. Time would be required for analysis, public consultation and Council decision. This would mean that:
  - a. the Village would not have interim operational capability until late spring of 2026, at the earliest. This is due to construction limitations during the winter months.
  - b. the time for holding proponents to the terms of their submitted proposals will likely have expired and there is a likelihood that one or both of the RFP processes would have to be cancelled.
  - c. there is also procurement risk associated with allowing RFPs to lapse.
  - d. the other key element of any timeline delay centres on the impact to those who are currently experiencing homelessness. These impacts were well articulated during previous Council debates and therefore are not repeated here.

### **Other Potential Sites**

Administration has provided a Ranked Property List that was exhaustive, and there are no other site options that have not already been identified. Because detailed assessments on other properties within that list have not occurred nor has there been any public consultation, Administration cannot offer alternatives at this time. What is clear is that all other possibilities have challenges and that Administration anticipates experiencing substantive unfavourable support by elements of our community for any site proposed.

### **Other Considerations**

Through public engagement, it remains clear that there is still a lack of full understanding of the 10-Part Plan and the details of the Village. We have therefore attached to this Memorandum the latest updated version of the Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs) and would also encourage those wishing additional and accurate information to consult the web page dedicated to this subject at [www.thunderbay.ca/village](http://www.thunderbay.ca/village)

### **Conclusion**

Administration is bringing these considerations forward so that Council is fully informed in its deliberations. Administration remains committed to satisfying the will of Council, which includes a human rights-based approach and the 10-Part Plan to respond to unsheltered homelessness in our community, as approved by City Council. The establishment and operationalization of a Temporary Village is an essential component of this plan. Without it, the 10-Part Plan would need to be re-written. The modified plan would see minimal assistance to those in-need and would prevent any concrete actions to better manage encampments. In short, status quo would be the approach.

C.C.

Kerri Marshall, Commissioner – Growth  
Cynthia Olsen, Director – Strategy & Engagement