

About the Project

Why is the City of Thunder Bay creating a Temporary Shelter Village?

We are creating a Village to give people pathways out of homelessness and into housing. The Village will also help reduce the number of encampments in the city and the health and safety risks that come with them, making it easier to manage public spaces, and improve safety and well-being for the whole community.

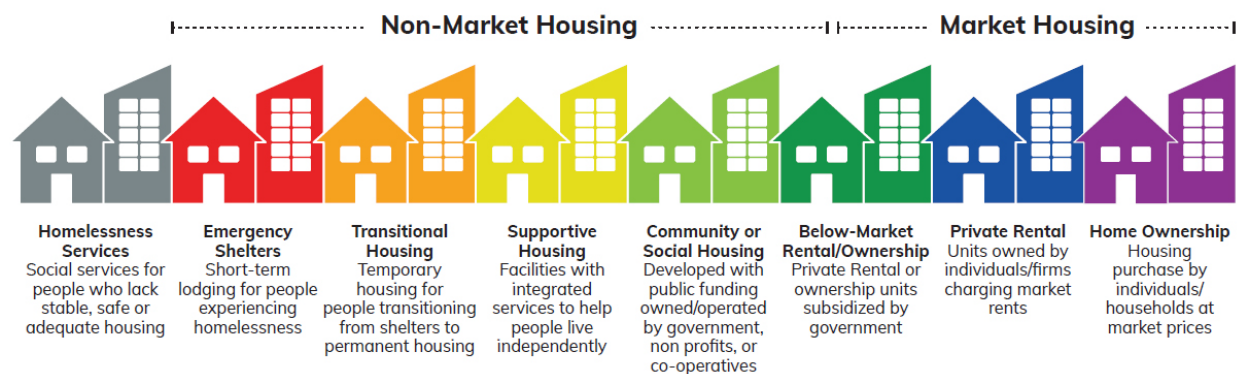
An [Ontario Superior Court of Justice ruling](#) has also found that cities cannot require people to leave encampments unless accessible indoor shelter options are available. The Village will help the City meet this legal obligation while also improving conditions for those living unsheltered.

Is this a permanent solution?

No. The commitment to the project is temporary for a period of five years. It is designed to meet immediate needs while the District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board (TBDSSAB) and community partners expand the availability of permanent housing, supportive housing, transitional housing, and shelter spaces.

How does this fit into Thunder Bay's plan to address homelessness?

The Temporary Shelter Village is one part of our [10 Part Enhanced Encampment Response Action Plan](#). The Village also supports work being done by the District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board and housing service providers to expand options across the full continuum of housing, including the shelter system.



Safety & Community Impacts

How will the site be kept safe and clean?

The Village will always have staff and security on site, around the clock. The property will be fully fenced, well-lit, and include buffer zones to help keep it safe. Regular garbage collection and site inspections will make sure the grounds and surrounding area are kept clean. Residents will be expected to follow a code of conduct that outlines rules and consequences, including how to keep the site and surrounding area safe and respectful for everyone. With staff, services, and security in place 24/7, the Village will be closely monitored, and the City will make changes if extra supports are needed.

How will noise, fires, or disturbances be managed?

Fires will not be permitted at the Village. Staff and security will be on site 24/7 to respond to any noise or disturbances. If conflicts arise, staff will step in to calm the situation so the site remains safe and respectful for everyone.

How will community safety be protected? What role will police play?

Staff and security will always be on site. The Thunder Bay Police Service (TBPS) will continue to be responsible for public safety issues and criminal matter issues. The third-party operator, like all other shelter and housing providers, will work with the TBPS if there are public safety issues and criminal matters at the Village.

What will happen with encampments near the Village?

Based on lessons learned from similar projects, once the Temporary Shelter Village is open, encampments will not be allowed in the immediate surrounding area. The City's Encampment Response Team will regularly monitor the area and work with people to relocate. Where enforcement is required, 'Trespass Notices' will be issued and enforced.

Will property values decrease?

Studies of similar transitional and supportive housing models show no decrease in surrounding property values.

Will crime increase?

Evidence from similar projects shows no substantial increase in crime. Generally, crime was either reduced, remained unchanged, or grew at a slower pace compared to overall community trends.

How is the City keeping residents and businesses informed?

The City is committed to keeping the community up to date as the project moves forward. Updates will be posted on the City's website and shared through social media.

A Neighbourhood Liaison Committee will also be created to bring together surrounding residents, businesses, Temporary Shelter Village staff, and City staff. This group will help with open communication and ongoing feedback. In addition, City staff will continue to be available to answer questions and hear concerns directly from the public.

Location

Where will the Village be located and how was that decided?

Administration reviewed more than 50 City-owned properties for the Village. Sites were evaluated on criteria such as size, distance to services, safety, and how quickly construction could start. Staff also worked with a crime prevention through environmental design professional and the Thunder Bay Police Service to look at design features that support safety, such as clear sight lines and areas with natural visibility from nearby activity. After reviewing staff's analysis, City Council decided on the Hillyard Site at 879 Alloy Place.

Do zoning rules apply to this project?

Building the Village on City owned property is allowed under Thunder Bay's Zoning By-law and Official Plan. These rules specifically say that public authorities, like the City, can use their land for public purposes such as this project.

What progress has been made at the site?

Since Council approved the Hillyard Site, the City has commenced several assessments to make sure the location is safe and suitable. These include an archaeological review, an environmental impact study, a site contamination check, a flood risk assessment, and a safety review with the Thunder Bay Police Service and community partners.

How will construction affect local businesses?

Construction impacts to local businesses will be minimal, as most of the work is occurring outside of the road right-of-way. The City will keep businesses informed about timelines and impacts.

What happens to the site when the Village closes?

The Village is designed as a short-term solution. When it is no longer needed, the site will already be fully serviced with infrastructure like water, sewer, and utilities. This means the property will be ready for future development, which can help support long-term growth and economic opportunities.

Operations and Services

Who will operate the Village?

A qualified third-party provider will operate the Village. They will be selected through a competitive process. The City will maintain oversight through inspections, reporting, and collaboration with the operator. The operator will also work closely with TBDSSAB and local housing providers to support transitions out of homelessness and into housing.

What facilities will be on site?

The Village will include 80 private, climate-controlled shelter units, each with a lockable door for safety and privacy. Residents will have access to washrooms, showers, and laundry facilities. There will also be shared common spaces for residents, as well as offices and space for staff and security.

What support services will be offered?

Residents of the Village will have access to a wide range of supports to help them stabilize and work toward appropriate housing. These include case management and help navigating systems and services, access to transportation, healthcare including mental health, and harm reduction and addiction services. Meals and snacks will be provided on site, and residents will also take part in life skills programs to support their independence.

What is a “low-barrier” shelter? What does “harm reduction” mean in this context?

A low-barrier shelter removes common obstacles to accessing sheltering. This includes allowing couples and pets.

Harm reduction means meeting people where they are, recognizing that not everyone is ready or able to stop using substances. Supports may include safer use strategies, managed use, or abstinence. The goal is to improve health, reduce risks, and support residents in their housing journey.

How will substance use be managed?

Substance use will not be allowed in shared or public areas of the Village. Residents will be able to use substances privately in their own units, where safety measures are in place. Each unit will have an emergency alert system so staff can respond quickly in the event of an overdose or other emergency. In addition, residents will have access to harm reduction supports and connections to addictions health care to help them use more safely and, when ready, work toward treatment and recovery.

How will residents be selected?

Intake will be managed by the operator in collaboration with willing emergency shelter providers. Priority will be given to people who face barriers accessing traditional shelter systems. The City and TBDSSAB will maintain oversight of the intake process.

Will residents pay rent?

Residents receiving Ontario Works (OW) or Ontario Disability Support Program (ODSP) will contribute their shelter allowance, where applicable.

Can couples stay together?

Yes. Couples will be accommodated.

Can residents bring pets?

Yes, where it is safe to do so. A pet policy is being developed for the safety of all residents, staff, and neighbours.

Will visitors be allowed?

Yes, but with restrictions. Approved visitors will be permitted only during designated hours and must check in with security.

Will there be rules and expectations for residents?

Yes. Each resident will sign an occupancy agreement outlining rules, responsibilities, and behavioural expectations. Violations may result in consequences, including termination of occupancy.

Costs & Accountability

How much will the project cost?

The total cost to build and set up the Temporary Shelter Village, including construction and infrastructure, is estimated at \$5.0 million. To date, the City has secured \$2.8 million in external funding to help cover these capital costs. Once the Village is open, the municipal contribution to operating costs is capped at \$1.5 million annually. The City continues to look for other opportunities to recover expenses.

How will success be measured?

The City will track the success of the Temporary Shelter Village using clear measures. These include the number of encampments and people living outdoors, how many units are filled and for how long, and how often residents are accessing health and support services. Another important measure is how many people move out of the Village and into stable housing. The City will also look at overall community impacts and benefits to make sure the project is meeting its goals.

Does this project align with the City's Community Safety & Well-Being Plan?

Yes. Addressing housing and homelessness is a key priority area in the City's Community Safety & Well-Being Plan. The Temporary Shelter Village directly supports achieving the priority area's targeted outcomes.

What community engagement has been done on the City's response to encampments?

Over the past two years, the City has been engaging the community by connecting with residents, businesses, service providers, Indigenous leaders, and people with lived or living experience. This has resulted in more than 2,500 points of engagement through focus groups, public surveys, drop-in events, and ongoing discussions with housing and service providers.

Who can I contact if I have questions?

Rilee Willianen, Encampment Response Lead – City of Thunder Bay

807-627-1453

sheltervillage@thunderbay.ca