

# **Joint Social and Housing Services Advisory Committee**

## **REPORT JAC2025-08**

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**Meeting Date:** February 19, 2025

**Meeting Time:** 1:30 p.m.

**Meeting Place:** County of Haliburton Council Chambers, 11 Newcastle Street, Minden and Electronic Video Meeting

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**Subject:** Encampment Response Update

**Author Name and Title:** Michelle Corley, Human Services Manager,  
Housing

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### **Recommendation(s):**

**Resolved That** Report JAC2025-08, "Encampment Response Update", be received; and

**That** the draft document(s) be available to the County of Haliburton and its local municipalities, for consideration of their local encampment response.

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Director

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Other

**Background:**

At the City of Kawartha Lakes Committee of the Whole Meeting of September 10, 2024, Council adopted the following resolution:

**CW2024-158**

**Moved By** Councillor Richardson

**Seconded By** Councillor Joyce

**That** the presentation by Michelle Corley, Manager of Human Services, and Aaron Sloan, Manager of Municipal Law Enforcement and Licensing, **regarding an Overview of the Encampment Response Protocol**, be received; and

**That** this recommendation be brought forward to Council for consideration at the next Regular Council Meeting.

**Carried**

This report provides an update and preview of a draft Council Policy (Appendix A) that the City of Kawartha Lakes Council will receive at the April 8<sup>th</sup>, 2025 Committee of the Whole meeting.

**Rationale:**

Municipalities in Ontario face a delicate balance when it comes to managing encampments on public land. On one hand, they must ensure the human rights and dignity of individuals experiencing homelessness, providing them with access to basic needs such as shelter, food, and safety. On the other hand, municipalities are tasked with maintaining safe, clean, and welcoming public spaces for all residents, which may be challenged by the presence of encampments in certain areas.

Municipalities must navigate complex legal and ethical considerations, ensuring that their actions comply with human rights obligations while addressing concerns from the broader community about public health, safety, and aesthetics. This balancing act requires careful coordination of resources, policies, and services that prioritize both the well-being of individuals in encampments and the needs of the general public. Approaching this issue with empathy, effective communication, and a commitment to long-term housing solutions is key to finding an equitable and sustainable resolution.

To this effect, the City recognizes that the Encampment Outreach and Response Protocol (Appendix B) will be implemented first, prior to escalation resulting in the enforcement of any applicable City By-law or regulation that restricts use of

City-owned land. This aligns with the City's duty to accommodate under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

Since the Committee of the Whole meeting on September 10, 2024, staff have begun applying many of the guiding principles outlined in the draft Council Policy to manage encampments. Over the past few months, this process has provided opportunities to foster collaborative relationships among City staff across various departments, gain valuable insights, and build trust with individuals experiencing homelessness. Additionally, staff have gained a better understanding of the impacts that encampments have on those staying in them, as well as on staff, municipal services, and nearby residents. Through this experience, staff have also refined operational processes.

Encampment Response is based upon a step-up framework. That is, can the individuals step up to the shelter, connect with natural resources (friends, family) or find other forms of short-term or long-term shelter. The support offered is also balanced with securing basic needs such as food, water, hygiene as well as referrals to Community Outreach Services where unhoused can get basic needs, medical care, mental health support and crisis counselling. The City's homelessness Outreach workers visited or connected with all known encampments at minimum twice per week. All household types are seen including couples, families and single adults with a range from young adult to senior. Pets are common.

Year after year, we continue to see a steady increase in the number of people experiencing homelessness, including those without shelter. The growing homelessness crisis, driven by long-standing policy changes and other complex systemic challenges, has become more visible. This has led to a significant rise in encampments on municipally-owned properties, including parks.

In 2024, 450 people experienced homelessness across the Service Manager region. As of February 4, 2025, 89 people are known to be experiencing homelessness in Kawartha Lakes, and 38 in the County of Haliburton, with 14 single individuals estimated to be experiencing unsheltered homelessness, with their experiences of unsheltered homelessness being more temporary or transient during the winter.

At October 4, 2024, at the height of the City's homelessness Outreach work in 2024, we were aware of 54 people in Kawartha Lakes experiencing homelessness. Of the 54 individuals, about 21 were staying in a park or on other municipally owned land, with 23 staying on private land, and 10 who were more transient in nature.

Below are some of the outcomes from the Outreach work completed by City staff:

- Several households secured permanent, secure and safe rental units or RGI units.
- One household who had been chronically outdoors for several years secured a place in a transitional housing program and has been stable and successful for three months.
- Several households gained access to emergency shelter and remain connected to many resources.

Other related outcomes include:

- Several households in encampments were supported to apply for housing benefits such as the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit.
- All households were referred to various resources and programs.
- All households were provided empathy, supportive counselling and active listening.
- All households were supported in creating safety and housing plans.
- All engaged in community outreach services.

The time spent engaging each person to achieve these outcomes can drastically vary from person to person.

Even with active engagement, enforcement activities were also conducted when necessary. As an example, a progressive enforcement action took place as a result of excessive debris, which involved a violation notice giving the individual 72 hours notice to clean up the site. On the day of the enforcement, the coordinated response team involving staff from various City departments engaged the individual at the site, resulting in a peaceful clean-up. Another enforcement action involved a notice to vacate the site at a local park, this was due to a lack of engagement and concerns over a dog who was frequently unleashed. A 72 hour notice was provided resulting in the individual peacefully leaving the area, with City staff coordinating the removal of remaining debris.

Both staff and Councillors received many complaints from residents living near encampment sites. The complaints ranged from reports of people committing illegal acts, noise, public urination and defecation. Council members and City staff received complaints, actively listened to the concerns of the resident, and attempted to provide education on the approach the City is taking. Staff reminded residents to call Police should there be an active crime or safety concern. Staff carefully reviewed documented evidence of reported concerns to distinguish between safety issues arising from behavior and discomfort or fear related to homelessness.

Those living in encampments also experienced several very serious hate crimes. These malicious acts included a knife attack, community-organized disruptive acts involving vehicles shining their lights on tents for extended periods of time, spitting, throwing trash, tent slashing and three cases of arson.

Homelessness continues to be a very polarizing topic in our community. The City has and will continue to provide public information and education to help support community unification. This is done by dispelling myths and bias, in an effort to raise awareness and compassion.

Effective December 1, 2024, staff amended the Service Agreement with A Place Called Home to permanently increase emergency shelter space from 19 beds to 30. In addition to this, staff also contracted with A Place Called Home to support a further temporary increase in shelter capacity through the Out of the Cold – Winter Response Program. Between combinations of these two initiatives, along with the cold weather forcing others to find indoor shelter, there has been a dramatic decrease in unsheltered homelessness in the Service Manager region this winter.

Unfortunately, increasing emergency shelter capacity only provides temporary relief from experiencing unsheltered homelessness. As the weather changes, temporary increased shelter space winds-down, and others simply concluding their stay in shelter, we will likely see the presence of encampments in our communities once again. We have not created new supportive housing units in a few years, which creates one of the biggest barriers in addressing chronic homelessness.

To look upstream, be proactive and plan to meet the future growth within Kawartha Lakes and the County, the City's 10-Year Housing and Homelessness plan is currently being refreshed. The new plan will not only project what is needed related to housing stock across the continuum and also the capital and operating investment required to bridge the gap. This extensive project also includes the completion of an updated Housing and Homelessness Needs Assessment. The Needs Assessment will include an incredible amount of data collection (both qualitative and quantitative) from consultations with individual stakeholders, those with lived or living experiencing of homelessness or housing insecurity, community partners across sectors, and a general public survey. It will include the review of census data and local statistics to understand current community needs, which ultimately, inform policy development and future investments. These findings will be compiled into a report that offers actionable insights and strategic recommendations to Council later this spring.

**Consultations:**

Data Analyst Coordinator  
Encampment Response Leadership Team  
Program Supervisor, Homelessness  
People Partner- Inclusion, Diversity, Equity & Accessibility

**Attachments:**

Appendix A – Draft Council Policy CP2025-00X Encampment Response Policy



DRAFT-Encampment  
Response Council

Appendix B – Draft Encampment Outreach and Response Protocol



DRAFT - Encampment  
Outreach and Respon

Appendix C – Letter of Support – Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness



Letter of Support -  
CAEH

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## Council Policy

Council Policy No.:	<b>CP2025-00X</b>
Council Policy Name:	<b>Encampment Response Policy</b>
Date Approved by Council:	<b>April 22, 2025</b>
Date revision approved by Council:	
Related SOP, Management Directive, Council Policy, Forms	<b>Encampment Outreach and Response Protocol, SOP2024-0XX</b>

### Policy Statement and Rationale:

The City's approach to encampment response strives to balance the need for safe, accessible public spaces with a compassionate and supportive approach to individuals experiencing homelessness. We recognize the complex challenges faced by our community's most vulnerable members and are committed to ensuring their dignity, health, and safety are prioritized. At the same time, we strive to maintain public spaces that are welcoming and safe for everyone. The City's encampment response focuses on providing outreach, resources, and appropriate alternatives to encampments, while working collaboratively with community agencies and individuals to support long-term solutions and respect the rights and needs of all community members.

Addressing homelessness requires a focus on providing safe, stable housing that meets the specific needs of individuals, from temporary shelters to permanent supportive housing. The City does not consider encampments as an acceptable form of shelter and is committed to helping those living in encampments transition to safer housing options. The City also recognizes that each person's journey from encampment to housing is unique, and the time spent in an encampment can vary significantly.

### Guiding Principles

In responding to encampments, the City is committed to:

1. Using a human rights-based approach that centres on ongoing, meaningful engagement with, and participation of, people living in encampments to

understand their needs, involving them wherever possible in decision-making processes that impact them.

2. Treating people living in encampments with the same dignity, respect, kindness, and compassion as it does with all residents, and applying a trauma-informed and culturally-safe approach.
3. A response to homelessness grounded in a Housing First approach that focuses on helping people find permanent housing with the supports they need to live independently.
4. Using available tools and options to help people living in encampments access indoor spaces and support services that address their identified needs.
5. Offering a variety of service models to meet the diverse needs of people living in encampments, including people with complex needs.
6. Using a coordinated and integrated approach in responding to the needs of people living in encampments that is grounded in best practices.
7. Engaging in ongoing proactive and transparent communication with people living in encampments, service providers, community agencies, the public and other stakeholders.
8. Recognizing the knowledge and experience of, and working with, Indigenous communities to utilize culturally-based approaches to support Indigenous people living in encampments.
9. Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of the Interdepartmental Protocol for Encampments.

### **Scope:**

This policy outlines how the City will respond to encampments on City-owned land and how it will support and engage with individuals living in those encampments.

### **Definitions:**

“City” or “Municipality” means the Corporation of the City of Kawartha Lakes.

“Council” means the municipal council for the City.

“Encampment” is a site or structure is a place on public or private land used as shelter by one or more people experiencing homelessness, including any supporting structures.



“Encampment Outreach and Response Protocol” guides the City’s operational approach to responding to encampments, while ensuring that the response aligns with the guiding principles and policy direction outlined in this Policy.

“Encampment Leadership Team” is chaired by a management team member from the City’s Housing Services Division, and includes management representatives from Housing Services, Municipal Law Enforcement, Community Services, Fire Services and Paramedic Services, as well as Police (OPP and Kawartha Lakes Police Services), along with other City staff who can provide expertise to support the Team’s work. The Encampment Leadership Team supports interdepartmental collaboration and accountability, according to the guiding principles outlined in this Policy.

“Encampment Working Group” coordinates the City’s response to encampments, involving multiple City Departments. The City’s Program Supervisor for Homelessness supports the coordination of the group. Membership of the group includes members of the Housing and Homelessness Outreach Team, as well as front-line and supervisory staff from Municipal Law Enforcement, Community Services, Fire Services and Paramedic Services. Additionally, members of the Encampment Leadership Group may participate in Encampment Working Group activities as needed.

“Housing and Homelessness Outreach Team” is responsible for managing services related to shelter, housing, and outreach in the City of Kawartha Lakes and the County of Haliburton. Its goal is to help people experiencing homelessness by connecting them with housing and support. In partnership with local shelters and housing programs, the Housing and Homelessness Outreach Team provides initial engagement with those living in encampments.

## **Policy:**

### **1.0 Governance**

1.01 Council will require staff to develop a corporately-approved Encampment Outreach and Response Protocol, or Management Directive, along with any necessary Standard Operating Procedures. These will guide the City’s approach to responding to encampments, ensuring the response aligns with the principles and policy direction outlined in this Policy. Additionally, the Protocol and any

related policies, directives, or procedures must comply with the Ontario Human Rights Code, which mandates public bodies, including municipalities, to accommodate individuals in a way that ensures equal access to services, housing, and resources, without discrimination.

- 1.02 The Encampment Leadership Team will develop, update and ensure appropriate activation of the Encampment Outreach and Response Protocol, ensuring that it aligns with the guiding principles and policy direction in this Policy, as well as evidence-informed best practices, relevant legal precedents and sector research and guiding documents.
- 1.03 The Encampment Working Group coordinates the City's response to encampments, involving multiple City Departments. If actions like clean-up orders or trespass orders are needed, the Group manages those decisions. It also plans and delivers coordinated services and support for people in encampments, ensuring public safety concerns are reasonably addressed. The Group makes operational decisions that align with the Encampment and Outreach Response Protocol and any other relevant corporate standard operating procedure, management directive or by-law.
- 1.04 The City acknowledges that the activation of the Encampment and Outreach Response Protocol, including the necessary time to engage and find appropriate alternative shelter and housing options, can vary significantly from individual to individual.
- 1.05 The City recognizes that the Encampment Outreach and Response Protocol will be implemented first, prior to escalation resulting in the enforcement of any applicable City By-law or regulation that restricts use of City-owned land. This aligns with the City's duty to accommodate under the Ontario Human Rights Code.
- 1.06 Nothing in the protocol purports in any way to limit or fetter the responsibilities, discretion, duties or powers of the Fire Chief, Medical Officer of Health, Chief of Police, Detachment Commander or any other statutory or other office or power

holder in relation to anything that may fall within their respective purview or jurisdiction, including the enforcement of any health or safety law or regulation.

## **2.0 Identification, Assessment and Coordination**

- 2.01 The Housing and Homelessness Outreach Team, wherever possible, will be the first connection to an encampment or site. This Team will manage all initial reports of encampments for assessment and coordination.
- 2.02 Encampments can be identified and reported by staff or a member of the public.
- 2.03 Upon receiving notification of an encampment located on City-owned land, the Housing and Homelessness Outreach Team will attempt to make contact and initiate outreach efforts to people living in the encampment.
- 2.04 The Housing and Homelessness Outreach Team will also work closely with various City departments, through the coordinated work of the Encampment Working Group to address health and safety concerns in encampments.
- 2.05 Each time a City staff member acting under the capacity of the Housing and Homelessness Outreach Team or Encampment Working Group visits an encampment, a site assessment will be completed.
- 2.06 Coordination of ongoing encampment response efforts and actions will be reviewed and managed by the Encampment Working Group.

## **3.0 Communication**

- 3.01 The City will communicate to the public and other community agencies on its general response to encampments through the Kawartha Lakes website, communication bulletins, training and webinars.
- 3.02 The City will strive to ensure public communication and education about homelessness response is clear, transparent and timely at the same time making a commitment to address stigma, discrimination and intolerance in the community.

- 3.03 The City will report statistical data relating to the number and location of encampments on the City's website, at minimum once a year.
- 3.04 In accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, at no time should personal information about individuals living in encampments be shared with the public, Municipal Councillors, or others. Relevant personal information related to support plans for an individual may only be shared with external community agencies if the individual has provided informed consent.

#### **4.0 Health and Safety**

- 4.01 The City will conduct regular risk assessments to identify health and safety hazards in encampment areas.
- 4.02 The City will attempt to provide access to basic needs and health services, which may include referral information to available community services.
- 4.03 The City will review documented evidence of reported concerns to distinguish between safety issues arising from behavior and discomfort or fear related to homelessness.
- 4.04 The City will provide training for staff and law enforcement on trauma-informed approaches and health and safety protocols.
- 4.05 Regularly assess health and safety conditions through inspections and feedback from residents and outreach workers.

#### **Monitoring and Review**

- 5.01 The Encampment Leadership Team and Encampment Working Group will continuously assess how the response is impacting both vulnerable individuals and the broader community, while ensuring that the goals and objectives of the City are being achieved. This can involve feedback from the public, community agencies, stakeholders and people in encampments.

**Revision History:**

Proposed Date of Review:

<b>Revision</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Description of Changes</b>	<b>Requested By</b>
0.0	[Date]	Initial Release	

DRAFT



# Encampment Outreach and Response Protocol

March 2025



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## Purpose and Objective

The purpose of the Encampment Outreach and Response Protocol in Kawartha Lakes (EORP) is to outline a clear, transparent, and coordinated process to guide City of Kawartha Lakes (CKL) staff in delivering the City's response to encampments on City-owned spaces, prior to enforcing any relevant CKL By-law, policy or other law that restricts use of City-owned land. This aligns with the City's duty to accommodate under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The EORP strives to balance the need for safe, accessible public spaces with a compassionate and supportive approach to individuals experiencing homelessness. We recognize the complex challenges faced by our community's most vulnerable members and are committed to ensuring their dignity, health, and safety are prioritized. At the same time, we strive to maintain public spaces that are welcoming and safe for everyone. The City's encampment response focuses on providing outreach, resources, and appropriate alternatives to encampments, while working collaboratively with community agencies, and individuals to support long-term solutions and respect the rights and needs of all community members.

For the purposes of the EORP, an encampment or site, is a structure on a portion of public or private lands that is used as a dwelling, lodging, living quarters or shelter for one or more persons experiencing homelessness and includes supporting structures. Further to this, the City recognizes that the above definition applies to a small fraction of unhoused persons in the community, but we recognize that the presence of structured encampments is growing. Many unhoused persons are transient and live without a physical structure; sleeping in various spaces throughout the City. For individuals encountered throughout the City who are sleeping, resting in public areas, it is recommended that supportive connections are made to the Housing and Homelessness Outreach Team (HHOT).

The City does not consider encampments an acceptable form of shelter and is committed to helping those living in encampments transition to safer housing options. The City also recognizes that each person's journey from encampment to housing is unique, and the time spent in an encampment can vary significantly.

The objectives of the EORP are to:

- Clarify the roles and responsibilities of key CKL divisions in addressing encampments including how the Housing Services Division (as the Lead) will work and coordinate with other divisions and external agencies (see Appendix A, Roles and Responsibilities of City Divisions);
- Outline how the City will support people living in encampments, with the goal of moving people to indoor space; and
- Outline the process for initiating and conducting enforcement, including the potential removal of an encampment.

## Guiding Principles

In responding to encampments, the City is committed to:

1. Using a human rights-based approach that centres ongoing, meaningful engagement with, and participation of, people living in encampments to understand their needs, involving them wherever possible in decision-making processes that impact them.
2. Treating people living in encampments with the same dignity, respect, kindness, and compassion as it does with all residents, and applying a trauma-informed and culturally-safe approach.
3. A response to homelessness grounded in a Housing First approach that focuses on helping people find permanent housing with the supports they need to live independently.
4. Using available tools and options to help people living in encampments in accessing indoor space and support services that address their identified needs.
5. Offering a variety of service models to meet the diverse needs of people living in encampments, including people with complex needs.
6. Using a coordinated and integrated approach in responding to the needs of people living in encampments that is grounded in best practices.
7. Engaging in ongoing proactive and transparent communication with people living in encampments, service providers, community agencies, the public and other stakeholders.
8. Recognizing the knowledge and experience of, and working with, Indigenous communities to utilize culturally-based approaches to support Indigenous people living in encampments.
9. Ongoing monitoring and periodic review of the EORP.

The City recognizes that the EORP will evolve as needed based on relevant emerging evidence-based best practices, stakeholder feedback, ongoing monitoring, legislation, and direction from Council Policy CP2025-00X-Encampment Response Policy.

## Encampment Response Process

Encampments are a complex issue that requires a coordinated multi-divisional response. Each encampment is unique and a tailored approach and supports to meet the needs and conditions of each encampment and the people living in them is required.

### Identification, Assessment and Coordination

The HHOT will wherever possible, be the first connection to an encampment or site. HHOT will manage all reports of encampments for assessment and coordination. Encampments can be identified and reported by CKL staff or a member of the public. When an encampment has been identified, the online [reporting form](#) should be submitted. The form can be accessed on the City of Kawartha Lakes [Encampment Response webpage](#) and will collect the following:

- Number of people at site,
- Number of tents or structures
- Approximate start date
- Address, area or closest intersection
- Description or other details

Form submissions are received by the general [streetoutreach@kawarthalakes.ca](mailto:streetoutreach@kawarthalakes.ca) email account. Should encampment concerns or reports be received by telephone, email or walk-in to any CKL public office, the CKL staff should share the information through the submission of the online reporting form, as referenced above. For accessibility purposes, CKL staff can co-complete the form with a member of the public.

Upon receiving notification of an encampment located on City land, the HHOT will:

- Attempt to make contact and initiate outreach efforts to people living in the encampment, within three business days. Coordination of services may take more than three business days in some cases due to unique situations and complexities.
- Simultaneously, the HHOT will inform the Encampment Working Group of the presence of the encampment.

- Ongoing monitoring and assessments of encampments are completed through site visits by members of the HHOT and the Encampment Working Group.
- Site visit notes are recorded and accessed in a secured electronic platform, by members of the HHOT and the Encampment Working Group.
- It is expected that site visit notes be entered in the electronic platform by the next business day.
- Members of the Encampment Working Group can make a request or inquiry to the HHOT for specific details related to the encampment, beyond the standard information contained within the electronic platform.
- Other City staff can receive information and updates by joining Encampment Working Group meetings.

Communication between City staff, will generally include the following information:

- Physical location of the encampment
- Size of the encampment, including number of people and structures
- Presence of potential safety hazards (e.g. propane tanks, improvised heating sources, etc.)
- Incidents of violence
- Presence of weapons and criminal activity
- Vulnerability of encampment residents
- Incidents of injury or death
- Other identified public health or safety risks
- General update on level of engagement with HHOT

When absolutely necessary, limited Personal Health Information (PHI) can safely be shared, in addition to the standard information referenced above. Sharing any relevant PHI is strictly limited to City staff only. It is best practice for all inter-divisional partners and stakeholders, which are privy to details about encampments and those staying in them, to limit details to only those relevant to case planning.

## **Outreach and Supports**

Outreach services play a crucial role in the City's response to encampments, ensuring that the needs and well-being of all people living in encampments remain a priority and that people are able to participate, where possible, in decisions that directly impact them.

The HHOT, along with other community agency partners focus on building trusting relationships and meaningful engagement with people in encampments through ongoing outreach and providing culturally appropriate and relevant supports.

This will include an assessment of people's unique needs, focused outreach and housing-related follow-up supports to assist people who are experiencing homelessness in finding and keeping housing.

The HHOT will provide specialized housing and stability-based case management, as well as support connections to other community services related to basic needs, physical health, mental health and other well-being supports. The HHOT will also support referrals to shelter, assistance in obtaining identification documents and income supports, referral to harm reduction services and distribution of harm reduction supplies and providing additional wellness checks during extreme cold and hot weather alerts.

## **Health and Safety**

The City prioritizes the safety and well-being of people living in encampments, it's staff, service providers and residents accessing these public spaces. Conditions in encampments may create health and safety concerns for people living in encampments as well as residents living close by. Open fires, combustibles, proximity of structures to each other, improvised heating sources, accumulation of materials, debris, drug paraphernalia, excessive noise, unleashed pets, and illegal activity may be more prevalent at encampments and may pose an increased health and safety risk. People living in encampments may be targets for victimization, human trafficking, violence and assault, and sexual exploitation. Those living unsheltered in encampments are also at increased risk of cold weather injuries such as frostbite and hypothermia.

The relative degree of risk at an encampment will be determined by regular assessment of factors such as but not limited to:

- Physical location of the encampment
- Size of the encampment, including number of people and structures
- The confirmed presence of potential safety hazards (e.g. propane tanks, improvised heating sources, etc.)
- Incidents of violence
- Presence of weapons and criminal activity
- Vulnerability of encampment residents
- Incidents of injury or death

- Other identified public health or safety risks

## **Individuals with Complex Needs**

The City acknowledges that it cannot force people living in encampments to accept services and supports. Through outreach, the City engages on an ongoing basis with people living in encampments to understand their shelter and individual support needs and connect them with appropriate services. People with two or more factors impacting their physical, mental, social, or financial well-being are considered to have complex needs. There may be times when people living in encampments with complex needs decline services, supports, and offers of indoor space. Outreach efforts are focused on continuing to provide caring and supportive services and facilitating access to a range of enhanced and intensive supports.

The City will intentionally invest time and resources to develop trusting relationships with people living in encampments and build partnerships with various sectors such as primary health care, mental health, and harm reduction to coordinate an integrated service response to support vulnerable people living in encampments. The City is committed to exhausting reasonable tools and options to support people living in encampments in accessing indoor space that meets their identified needs.

At all times, including if enforcement is required, these services and supports remain available and people living in encampments will be treated with dignity and respect.

## **Encampment Response Escalation**

The City recognizes that the Encampment Outreach and Response Protocol will be implemented first, prior to escalation resulting in the enforcement of any applicable City By-law or regulation that restricts use of City-owned land. This aligns with the City's duty to accommodate under the Ontario Human Rights Code.

The City will strive to provide prior written notice in all situations requiring enforcement. When Enforcement notices are required, a minimum of 72 hours for compliance should be provided. Where a 72-hour notice period is not feasible, the City reserves the right to issue notices with shorter compliance periods.

## Compliance Periods

Situations requiring compliance are typically activated to address situations related to excessive debris, noise, pets, or other situations that pose a serious and substantiated public safety or health and safety risk to people living in encampments. Should a situation with a particular encampment be identified by the Encampment Working Group, a compliance notice will be provided by Municipal Law Enforcement and Licensing (MLE) as part of the encampment response escalation process.

Compliance notices periods will vary, but typically range from 24 hours to one week.

Should further escalation be required, the following sections outline the process to activate enforcement of City By-laws.

## Immediate Action

Whereby their nature, a public safety or health and safety concern requires immediate action, the City further reserves the right to enforce immediately and without prior written notice. Immediate action relates to active, critical situations that must be handled to minimize risk such as an unleashed pet. The Encampment Working Group, in consultation with the HHOT or any other relevant City staff, will determine when a written notice is not feasible.

## Notices of Enforcement to End the Encampment

When a notice to end an encampment is required, a Notice of Violation is given pursuant to a City of Kawartha Lakes By-law or a notice given pursuant to the *Trespass to Property Act, R.S.O. 1990 c. T21*. Before issuing a notice, the HHOT will coordinate with relevant divisions or others, such as **MLE, Parks and Recreation, Police, Fire** and others as needed to engage with the people in the encampment to inform them of applicable regulations/policy.

The HHOT and MLE will be the primary contact with people in encampments. HHOT and MLE will engage with them to provide information related to the written notice to end the encampment, including details on the activities that are contrary to applicable legislation, the period of compliance, and the consequences for failing to do so. . In all cases, the HHOT will be available to answer questions people living in encampments may have or to direct them to available services and supports.

Throughout this process, the HHOT will continue to attend at the encampment to assist people living in encampments in accessing indoor space and appropriate supports.

Notices to end the encampment will only be issued when:

- Circumstances in an encampment or encampments pose a serious and substantiated public safety or health and safety risk to people living in encampments, other members of the public and/or immediately surrounding residents; or
- People living in encampments have been provided with enhanced and intensive supports, particularly people with complex needs, and other reasonable tools and options have been exhausted and they continue to decline indoor space or decline to meaningfully work on the development of a housing plan.

At the time of issuance of a notice to end the encampment and throughout the compliance period, the HHOT will make several attempts to meet with people living in encampments in addition to providing them with written information. The HHOT will outline what may happen on the day of enforcement, and options of services and supports, including shelter, health, and mental health supports, and storage options that are available to them up to and including the day of enforcement.

The City will use plain language and accessible modes of communicating with people living in encampments, including meeting to provide information and answer questions. If for any reason, the City decides not to enforce a notice, the decision will be communicated to people living in encampments using both verbal and written methods prior to the compliance date. Should the City decide to proceed with enforcement at a later date, a new notice and compliance date will be issued.

## **Enforcement to End the Encampment**

The City recognizes that enforcement has a significant impact on people living in encampments. If an encampment remains after the compliance period has passed, the City may proceed with enforcement. The Encampment Working Group in consultation with members of the Encampment Response Leadership Team will be responsible for making the final decision to enact and deliver 72-Hour notices to end the encampment.

Prior to enforcement:



- Through a meeting with members of the Encampment Response Leadership Team, HHOT staff will confirm whether people are declining indoor space or declining to meaningfully work on the development of a housing plan, even after they have been provided with enhanced and intensive supports, particularly people with complex needs, and that other reasonable tools and options have been exhausted; and
- HHOT staff will confirm that people living in encampments subject to enforcement were provided with written information outlining what may happen on the day of enforcement, and options of services and supports, including shelter, health, and mental health supports, and storage options that are available to them.

On the day of enforcement, the City will:

- Make available a HHOT staff member to people living in the encampment who have questions or concerns related to enforcement;
- Offer people living in the encampment a referral to indoor space, if one exists;
- Attempt to arrange on-site mental health and other support services to the people living in the encampments;
- Ask people in the encampment to leave the site. Transportation will be offered to all people living in the encampment;
- Offer storage space to store personal belongings for those who accept indoor space referral; and
- Clean up encampment site.

The City will ensure that people living in the encampment are provided with adequate time to sort and collect personal belongings on the day of enforcement. Whereby their nature, a public safety or health and safety concern requires immediate action, the City reserves the right to shorten the time to sort and collect personal belongings. In these situations, the City will communicate an alternative process.

The presence of Police may be necessary to keep the peace, to support City staff in the safe performance of their work or to assist in enforcement of City By-laws and trespass notices.

## **Storage of Personal Belongings**

The City is committed to treating people living in encampments and their belongings with respect and dignity as it does for any other residents. The HHOT engages with

people in encampments to identify their storage needs and provide them with options. The City offers limited storage space for personal belongings and vital documents for people living in encampments who accept a shelter referral or will be transitioning into housing imminently. All property collected will be appropriately tagged and securely stored, if storage options are available.

## Site Clean-Up

The City's Parks and Recreation staff engage in routine maintenance at parks and right-of-way where encampments are located. These staff work with people in encampments to remove unwanted items and garbage and ensure that parks and right-of-way remain safe and accessible for all. Following enforcement, or an identification of an abandoned encampment, Park's and Recreation staff will remove all remaining items at an encampment site. For occupational health and safety reasons, the City may use large equipment to assist in clean-up efforts.

Parks and Recreation staff will not enter an encampment site for clean-up until:

- People living in the encampments have gathered their belongings and verified that nothing they wish to retain has been left behind;
- HHOT staff have surveyed the area in and around the encampment after people have vacated, collecting, documenting and storing any items that appear to be of importance; and
- HHOT gives the Parks and Recreation staff the clearance to enter encampment site.

Site clean-up on private property is the responsibility of the private property owner.

## Abandoned Encampments

<To be inserted>

## Prohibited Areas for Erecting Encampments, Temporary Shelters, or Tents

<Currently under review>

## Campfire and Barbecue Use

The Open Air Burning By-law 2016-110 and the *Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, S.O. 1997, c. 4*, which regulates open-air burning within the City, shall be complied with and will be enforced. Regulate Public Parks and Facilities By-law 2006-147 regulates Campfire and Barbeque use in City Parks.

## Engagement with Stakeholders, Partners and People Living in Encampments

The City is committed to meaningful engagement and participation of people living in encampments in decision-making processes that impact them. “Meaningful Engagement” refers to the ongoing and purposeful participation of people with lived experience that fosters genuine participation, robust collaboration, and contribution. It values the experiences and perspectives of participants, striving to integrate feedback into decision-making processes.

Meaningful engagement in the context of outreach includes working with people to build trust and allowing them to define their immediate needs. It also includes working with people to define their social determinants of health such as income and other social and health supports to meet those needs. Meaningful engagement ensures that people living in encampments are able to participate in decisions that directly impact them. Outreach staff will provide resources and opportunities to support those decisions.

The City will continue to develop ongoing opportunities for meaningful engagement of people with lived experience of encampments in the encampment response process as well as broader strategic policy and program development work, including but not limited to:

- Expanding advisory groups
- Community engagement opportunities including place-based meetings with people living in encampments when this can be facilitated
- Service user surveys and feedback
- Street Needs Assessment survey of people experiencing homelessness
- Employing peer workers and harm reduction workers

Indigenous people are persistently overrepresented among people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in the City of Kawartha Lakes. This is the direct result of historical and ongoing colonialism, systemic racism, government policies and practices, dispossession of lands, and intergenerational socio-economic inequities and trauma. The City acknowledges that Indigenous communities are best positioned to determine the needs and solutions for the other members of their communities. The City is committed to supporting and advancing Indigenous-led solutions to unsheltered homelessness.

The City recognizes the critical role Indigenous homelessness service organizations play in supporting Indigenous people living in encampments through trauma-informed outreach and assistance to access culturally based shelter, support services and housing that meets their needs.

## **Service Providers and Community Partners**

Service providers and community partners contribute specialized knowledge based on their experience in delivering services; identify the needs and challenges of the service users they serve to help the City understand the issues on the ground; and provide specialized services and supports to people living in encampments, such as culturally appropriate supports for Indigenous, Black, racialized, 2SLGBTQ+ and other equity deserving groups.

## **Collection, Use and Disclosure of Personal Information**

In accordance with the Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act, at no time should personal information about individuals living in encampments be shared with the public, Municipal Councillors, or others. Additionally, it is best practice to limit personal identifying information within email correspondence. The City will ensure that any collection, use and disclosure of personal information in its encampment response is in accordance with legislation (i.e.: PHIPA, MFIPPA) and associated regulations, standards, and other City policies.

Limited sharing of information between City staff and Police is supported, and is further defined in a separate information sharing agreement or in accordance with processes related to By-law enforcement.

## **Communication with People Living in Encampments**

The City will use multiple communication methods, in clear and plain language, to ensure people living in encampments are informed about its encampment response. The HHOT will act as a primary source for information sharing. Information regarding notices and enforcement will be communicated to people living in encampments through both verbal and written means as appropriate. City staff will also verbally inform people living in encampments about the EORP and provide an information sheet and, if requested, a copy of the EORP.

People living in encampments who have questions and concerns can contact the City's Human Services Department to be connected to the HHOT.

## **Communication with Service Providers and Community Partners**

The City will continue to communicate updates to partner service providers and other community agencies on its response to encampments through the Kawartha Lakes website, communication bulletins, training and webinars. The City and its outreach partners will provide an information sheet including the URL link and an outline of the EORP.

## **Communication with Business Improvement Areas and the Public**

Information on the City's approach to encampments will be posted on the City's website. The City may provide the following information publicly, provided it does not put the safety of staff and people living in encampments at risk:

- Roles and responsibilities of relevant City Divisions
- Services and supports available to the people in the encampments and how to access them

Business Improvement Areas (BIAs) and residents play an important role in notifying the City when an encampment is established in a nearby area. This can include safety and maintenance of encampment areas, noise, unsafe needle disposal, waste, and fire hazard removal. The City will endeavour to communicate with BIAs and residents to provide updates and resources as needed to assist them in supporting the City's response to encampments.

## Service Request Information, and Compliments

Anyone in the City of Kawartha Lakes, including staff and City Councillors can report new encampments, or concerns about existing encampments, such as noise, animal welfare or hazardous waste related to encampments to the City by contacting Human Services or emailing the HHOT at [streetoutreach@kawarthalakes.ca](mailto:streetoutreach@kawarthalakes.ca) .

The relevant City Divisions will collaborate to ensure that public complaints are received and addressed promptly.

Details on how to submit complaints and compliments on the City's response to encampments and encampment-related issues, can be found on the City's Encampment Response webpage. If it is determined that a complaint can be more effectively addressed by other City Divisions, it will be forwarded to and responded by those respective Divisions.

## Monitoring and Review

The City recognizes that the EORP may need to evolve and adapt to emerging issues, legislative changes or through adopting new evidence-based best practices. The EORP will be maintained by the HHOT with a commitment to ongoing monitoring and periodic review and evaluation of its implementation. The HHOT, Encampment Working Group or the Encampment Response Leadership Team may, from time to time, make any necessary clarifications, refinements, minor modifications, or technical amendments to this EORP. Any modifications will be fully-communicated to the Encampment Response Leadership Team and the Encampment Working Group. The Encampment Response Leadership Team will complete changes that are more strategic in-nature that change fundamental processes.

Monitoring and evaluation are critical parts of tracking and assessing performance to identify areas for improvement and adjustments and ensuring that the goals and objectives of the City are being achieved. Key performance indicators will be developed to support ongoing monitoring and evaluation. Ongoing feedback from City staff, people with lived experience in encampments, community service providers, Indigenous people with lived experience and Indigenous service providers, and other key stakeholders will be critical for informing this evaluation. Reviews will also take into consideration any changes in any applicable legislation, Council direction, and any policy or procedural changes.

Nothing in this protocol purports in any way to limit or fetter the responsibilities, discretion, duties or powers of the Fire Chief, Medical Officer of Health, Chief of Police, Detachment Commander or any other statutory or other office or power holder in relation to anything that may fall within their respective purview or jurisdiction, including the enforcement of any law.

## **Continued Outreach and Supports**

It is the City's intention to maintain communication with people leaving encampments who wish to remain in contact in order to provide ongoing supports and services, recognizing that some may not immediately accept support after enforcement. The HHOT will provide information on accessing City services to people leaving encampments, ensuring they have the resources available should they require assistance at any point after leaving the encampment.

The City will continue to offer supports to people who have left an encampment which may include providing information on resources, assistance in accessing temporary shelter, facilitating access to permanent housing, referrals to comprehensive case management services, and ensuring access to healthcare and mental health services.

## **Encampment Prevention and Restoration**

Encampment prevention plays a crucial role in the City's response to encampments. The most effective means of encampment prevention is the City's efforts to increase permanent deeply affordable and supportive housing with a range of support services to help people live independently and with dignity.

The City may implement prevention and restoration measures for a period of time to manage encampment growth or prevent the establishment of new encampments at identified locations to ensure that public spaces are restored and accessible to all. Measures may include fencing, re-seeding, and landscaping as well as animating public spaces. In these circumstances, the City will provide information and signage may be posted at parks or public spaces advising that prevention and restoration measures are being taken.

## Encampments on Private Property

Encampments, temporary shelters, or tents identified on private property are primarily the responsibility of the property owner. Where the owner has not provided consent, concerns of the owner are to be addressed by local police and will be subject to ordinary enforcement procedures in accordance with applicable laws.

Local police may seek the assistance of Municipal Law Enforcement Officers as appropriate or required in the circumstances.

Provided the property owner permits and requests, the HHOT will engage with encampment, temporary shelter, or tent residents to identify alternate sheltering options and attempt to address any barriers to shelter or housing. Additionally, HHOT will work with individuals at the encampment, temporary shelter, or tent to provide supports and referrals as needed and work towards goals in individualized housing plans.

Private property owners who discover an encampment on their property can request Street Outreach to provide outreach assistance by emailing [streetoutreach@kawarthalakes.ca](mailto:streetoutreach@kawarthalakes.ca) or completing the online form.



# Appendix A: Roles and Responsibilities of City Divisions, Working Groups and Council

## City of Kawartha Lakes Council

Direct staff to develop a corporately approved Encampment Outreach and Response Protocol, or Management Directive, along with any necessary Standard Operating Procedures to support encampment response in the City of Kawartha Lakes. These governing documents will guide the City's approach to responding to encampments, ensuring the response aligns with the principles and policy direction outlined in the Council-approved Policy, specifically CP2025-00X.

### Human Services - Customer Relations Representatives

Provides residents, businesses, and visitors with information related to Human Services programs and supports, including homelessness outreach supports, Monday to Friday 8:30-4:30pm either in-person at 68 Lindsay Street North, Lindsay or by telephone at 705-324-9870. In addition to the [streetoutreach@kawarthalakes.ca](mailto:streetoutreach@kawarthalakes.ca) email, or online Encampment Reporting Form, this team is a resource for members of the public to report encampments, or inform the City of concerns such as noise, animal welfare or hazardous waste related to encampments.

### Fire Services

Provides fire safety education and information, including how to prevent a fire from occurring, and what to do in the case of a fire to people living in encampments. Fire Services participates in fire safety assessments upon complaint or request and responds to calls for service for fires in encampments.

Fire Services will exercise its authority under the Fire Protection and Prevention Act, 1997, S.O. 1997, c. 4 to address any circumstance that may constitute an immediate threat to life. Fire Services will also attend any fire related incidents to enforce any City By-laws such as Open Air Burning By-law #2016-110 and the Regulate Public Parks and Facilities By-law #2006-147.

### Encampment Response Leadership Team

Meets to provide leadership oversight and strategic decision-making and direction on the City's encampment response. The Encampment Response Leadership Team is

chaired by a management team member from the City's Housing Services Division, and includes staff from across City Divisions to enable discussion specifically on the topic of encampments and areas impacted by encampments. The Encampment Response Leadership Team will support interdivisional collaboration and accountability with a common vision, goal, and resource plan for responding to encampments.

The Encampment Response Leadership Team includes management representatives from Housing Services, Municipal Law Enforcement, Community Services, Fire Services and Paramedic Services, as well as Police (OPP and Kawartha Lakes Police Services), along with other key City staff who can provide expertise to support the Team's work.

The Encampment Response Leadership Team will meet at minimum twice per year to review the EORP, collectively discuss and recommend any changes to the EORP, and to monitor and assess outcomes.

### **Encampment Working Group**

Meets to plan and deliver coordinated services and intensive, focused supports. The Encampment Working Group is comprised of multidisciplinary frontline staff that are tasked with encampment related response and is aligned with best practice approaches. The Encampment Working Group will meet regularly to ensure coordinated encampment engagement, including assessing safety, stability, housing plans and the needs of those living in encampments. The working group is empowered to determine situations wherein escalation is needed, based on assessments and engagement. When needed, the Encampment Working Group will initiate a meeting with specific stakeholders for consultation and to receive guidance and determine next steps.

The City's Program Supervisor for Homelessness supports the coordination of the group. Membership of the group includes members of the Housing and Homelessness Outreach Team, as well as front-line and supervisory staff from Municipal Law Enforcement, Community Services, Fire Services and Paramedic Services. Additionally, members of the Encampment Leadership Group may participate in Encampment Working Group activities as needed. Diversity in City Divisions ensures subject matter expertise and specific insights and considerations to support continual improvement to frontline encampment operations.

Additionally, the Encampment Working Group provides space for information to be shared across Divisional staff, including priority updates to support the needs of people living in encampments and ensure locations impacting public safety are addressed by all relevant Divisions. The Encampment Working Group is represented on the Encampment

Response Leadership Team to ensure operational issues are brought-forward to the Encampment Response Leadership Team and decision-making is applied and implemented at the working group level.

## **Housing and Homelessness Outreach Team (HHOT)**

The HHOT is comprised of outreach, policy and leadership staff within the City's Housing Services Division. Given the City's role Consolidated Municipal Service Manager, the HHOT supports homelessness outreach work within the City of Kawartha Lakes and the County of Haliburton. The HHOT coordinates shelter, housing and outreach services. Its mission is to connect people experiencing homelessness with supports and housing. The HHOT, in partnership with local emergency shelters and supportive housing programs, leads the City's response to encampments. The HHOT provides street outreach services Monday to Friday 8:30-4:30pm.

## **Municipal Law Enforcement (MLE)**

Investigates By-law complaints and issues associated notices of enforcement where appropriate. MLE works closely with the HHOT on encampment related issues. When necessary, MLE supports encampment response escalation and enforcement actions.

## **Paramedic Services**

Provides medical care and support to people living in encampments.

## **Parks and Recreation**

Parks and Recreation staff are responsive crews whose day-to-day work contributes to ensuring all parks remain welcoming for passive and active recreational use. Parks and Recreation staff also contribute towards identification of encampments in City parks and complete referrals to the HHOT.

Through coordination with the Encampment Working Group, Parks and Recreation staff remove abandoned items, garbage, debris, fire pits and combustibles identified as potential fire hazards. Parks and Recreation staff ensure that parks remain safe and accessible for all by restoring parkland and removing hazards.

DRAFT

Contact information can go here. URL can be bolded and be in **Jump In gold** or **white**.





February 6, 2025

**City of Kawartha Lakes Council**

City of Kawartha Lakes  
P.O. Box 9000, 26 Francis Street,  
Lindsay, ON, K9V 5R8

Dear Members of Council,

On behalf of the Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness (CAEH), a national charitable organization committed to ending homelessness, I am writing to express our strong support for the City of Kawartha Lakes' proposed Encampment Response Policy. We are encouraged to see the City's commitment to a housing-focused, human rights-based approach that respects the dignity, health, and safety of all people experiencing homelessness.

We believe that the City's policy, particularly the guiding principles emphasizing compassion, engagement, and a Housing First approach, demonstrates a commitment to a sustainable, effective, and human-centric approach. The CAEH promotes evidence-based, housing-focused solutions that support the long-term well-being of individuals while addressing the broader needs of the community. We know from years of experience that a Housing First response to encampments is not just the most humane approach, but also the most effective in ensuring successful transitions for individuals into permanent housing. We are particularly pleased to see the City's focus on working collaboratively with local service providers and engaging with Indigenous communities to ensure culturally appropriate support for all people, which is a critical component of any successful response to encampments.

We furthermore commend the City's recognition of the unique, individual needs of those living in encampments and its commitment to ensuring that the time spent in an encampment is minimized through the provision of safe and stable housing options. The clear emphasis on offering support and resources tailored to individuals' circumstances will be vital to ensuring their successful transition to permanent housing.

As a partner in this work, we are confident that the City of Kawartha Lakes is taking an important step toward reducing homelessness and improving the well-being of all residents, including those who have been living in encampments.

We are excited to offer our full support and expertise to the City as you move forward with implementing this policy. We stand ready to collaborate with the City's team to provide the resources and guidance

needed to ensure that the encampment response is not only effective, but sustainable and compassionate.

Thank you for your leadership on this important issue. We look forward to the opportunity to work with the City of Kawartha Lakes and other community stakeholders to support your efforts to end homelessness in your region.

Sincerely,



**Tim Richter**  
**President & CEO**  
**Canadian Alliance to End Homelessness**  
**tim@caeh.ca**