

# Community Encampment Plan

## London's Health & Homelessness Whole of Community Response

### Summary of Key Points

A roadmap to help the most marginalized Londoners move safely inside, become stabilized, supported and connected to the right housing, and to help them stay housed.

# Table of Contents

- What is an encampment?..... 2
- What is the Community Encampment Plan? ..... 2
- Why are there encampments? ..... 2
- Who lives in encampments? ..... 3
- Why is a Community Encampment Plan being implemented? ..... 3
- Why are encampments important support while creating pathways to solve  
homelessness?..... 3
- How do encampments create a pathway to housing? ..... 4
- Where are encampments located? ..... 4
- How will people living in encampments be supported?..... 5
- How will health and safety be addressed at encampments? ..... 5
- Where can I learn more about the Community Encampment Response? ..... 5

## **What is an encampment?**

- The term encampment refers to emergency accommodation established by people who are unhoused, usually on public property or privately-owned land, and often without permission.
- Encampments are a consequence of Canada's failure to meet its human rights obligation to ensure that all individuals have access to adequate housing – housing that is secure, affordable, habitable, accessible, culturally appropriate, and in a suitable location with access to services.

## **What is the Community Encampment Plan?**

- The Community Encampment Plan offers an approach to manage and support those living in encampments in London, including criteria for multi-agency service collaboration.
- The Community Encampment Plan pertains to encampments in public spaces such as, but not limited to, park land and parking lots owned by the City of London. It is not applicable to encampments on private property.
- Encampments are an unfortunate reality in our community. The purpose of this plan is to decrease human suffering while walking with individuals experiencing homelessness on their journey home.

## **Why are there encampments?**

- While encampments have always been a feature of homelessness, in the last five years, and particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic, encampments have become more numerous, more densely populated, and more visible across the country.
- The growth of encampments has been driven by a range of inter-related human rights failures, including the impacts of colonial laws and policies on Indigenous Peoples, systemic discrimination in the housing market, a severe lack of available and affordable housing that has become a deepening national crisis, and barriers to accessing emergency shelters.

## **Who lives in encampments?**

- Encampments represent an effort by people who are unhoused to claim their human rights and meet their most basic needs.
- Encampments are often the only housing option currently available to many, or the only available option that meets their needs.

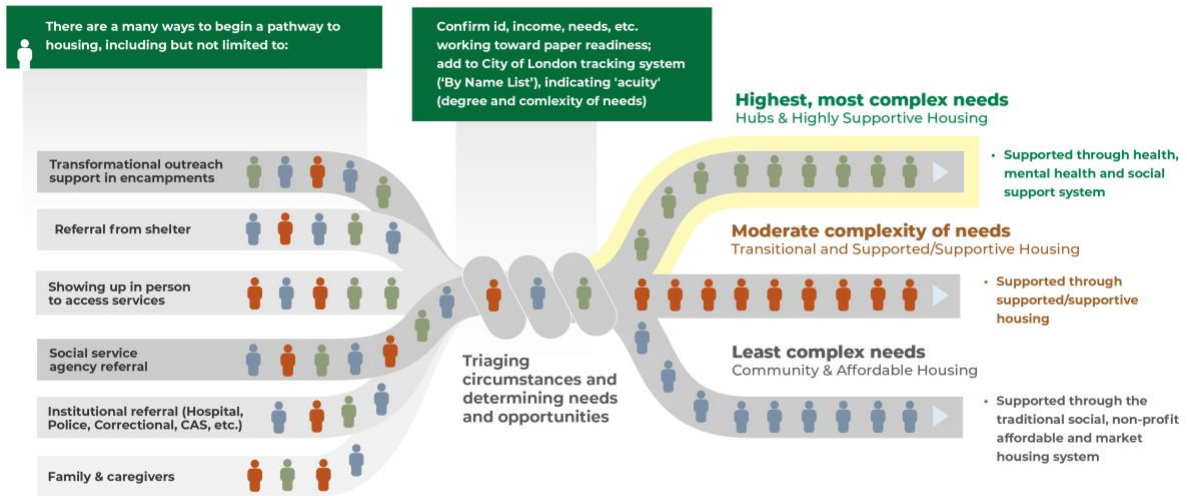
## **Why is a Community Encampment Plan being implemented?**

- Encampments will not go away until there is adequate income, shelter, and housing with appropriate supports, when required. Until that time, encampments can be managed by supporting individuals to obtain housing and access to emergency shelter, and exercising enforcement as necessary.
- Responding to an encampment in public spaces requires balancing the needs of all residents of London — housed and unhoused.
- All residents deserve to feel safe, experience a sense of belonging, and connect to a sense of community. All residents deserve a life free of violence and intimidation. All residents deserve to experience wellness.
- Vulnerable members of the community, including people experiencing homelessness, are deserving of care, compassion, and assistance. The work of responding to encampments must be grounded in the emerging Health and Homelessness Whole of Community System Response approach.

## **Why are encampments important support while creating pathways to solve homelessness?**

- The current reality of unsheltered homelessness in London reiterates that homelessness is not only a housing issue, but it is always a housing issue.
- Any approach to respond to the encampment situation in London needs to center on housing solutions with interim, safe, and appropriate measures until people can exit homelessness for a permanent place to live with appropriate supports.

# How do encampments create a pathway to housing?

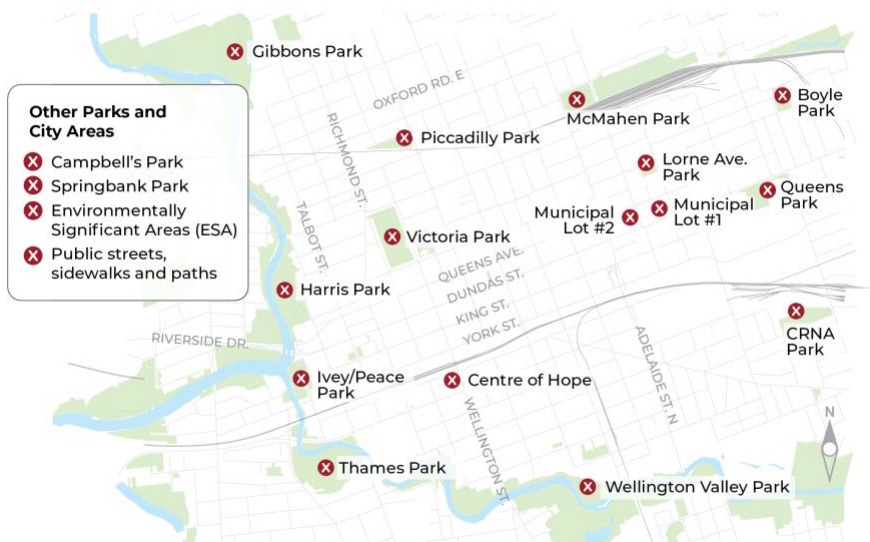


The term 'acuity' defines how marginalized a given person is. High acuity refers to those whose social and personal conditions are severe. This can include physical health, mental health, substance use health and/or deprivation of basic needs like food, water, housing, or systemic barriers to accessing services.

- There are many ways to begin a pathway to housing including referral from shelter, showing up in person to access services, social service or institutional agency referral, and family and caregivers.
- For individuals with the highest, most complex needs, transformational outreach support in encampments provides the pathway to housing.

## Where are encampments located?

The following identifies locations where encampments are proactively enforced. These are mixed use spaces that are regularly utilized for multiple purposes.



## How will people living in encampments be supported?

The following outlines the rights based approach to supporting encampments:










1. Access to safe and clean drinking water
2. Access to hygiene and sanitation facilities
3. Resources and support to ensure fire safety
4. Waste management systems
5. Social supports and services
6. Resources to support harm reduction
7. Resources that support food and food safety


## How will health and safety be addressed at encampments?

The City of London has established clear parameters of what is acceptable and what is not acceptable as it relates to locations of encampments, the number of structures in encampments, and various behaviours of people in encampments.

The following captures the operating considerations to promote safety for people living in encampments and neighbours. Encampment reviews will be conducted to identify health and safety issues or concerns that need to be addressed.

### ENCAMPMENT SAFETY

- Human Trafficking:** 
  - Human trafficking or any illegal associated activity is not tolerated. Any evidence of human trafficking observed within the encampment, will be reported.
- Pets:** 
  - Pets must be on a leash when outside a tent/structure.
  - A muzzle is required if the pet is known to be violent.
- Underage individuals:** 
  - No minors (under 16) are to be permitted to reside in the encampment. If minors are observed residing in the camp, they are to be reported to CAS.
- Violence/threats:** 
  - Intimidation, physical violence, or threats of physical violence towards neighboring tents, community residents, or staff providing services will not be tolerated.
- Fires:** 
  - No open burn fires, compressed gas cylinders, gasoline containers or explosives are permitted in camps.
- Camp Capacity:** 
  - Structures must be free standing and not attached to anything. No fortification will be permitted.
- Weapons:** 
  - Brandishing weapons or firearms towards other neighboring tents, community residents, or staff providing services will not be tolerated.
- Cleanliness:** 
  - No used, uncapped needles in or around the site. Sharps containers must be used for disposal.
  - No large amounts of garbage, food remains or evidence of hoarding.
- Location of Camp:** 
  - Tents cannot be located near a playground, pathway, open area of play, or on a flood plain, river embankments, roadways, private property, side walks or bus shelters.



## Where can I learn more about the Community Encampment Response?

To read the full Community Encampment Response, please visit the Whole of Community System Response section on the [City of London's website](#).