

Re: Item No. 15.1.6

HALIFAX

June 4, 2024

**Item 15.1.6:
Strategic Opportunities to
Address Homelessness**

Current State

- By Name List: 1,259 and growing
- 4 Designated locations: 30 spaces, 85+ people
- Non designated locations: 40+ people
- Lots of work underway
- Significant deficits in options available for people
- Organic growth is occurring now into the summer
- New report from Federal Housing Advocate

Provincial activities

- Since 2021, 444 new supportive housing units in HRM.
- There are now 399 additional emergency shelter beds, 193 of them opened in the past six months.
- A 19-unit Pallet Village has been opened in Sackville.
- A temporary housing facility for 32-women and gender-diverse individuals has opened in Halifax.
- A 35-unit temporary housing facility for African Nova Scotian/Black individuals opened in Dartmouth.
- **250 new beds and units coming in 1 – 12 months**

New resources must meet the need

- High acuity individuals
- Adequate mental and addictions support
- Single room occupancy
- Wet shelter
- Couples
- Youth

**Specific individual
case management
plans required**

Municipal activities

Municipality required to support all community members

- Gray Arena
- Modulars
- Humanitarian aid
- Extreme weather
- Case management
- Diversion funds
- Bus passes and tickets
- Zoning and bylaw changes
- BID Navigators
- Halifax Forum Shelter
- 88 calls/month to 311
- Snow, garbage and maintenance
- No tent kits

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Strategic approaches

<u>Option</u>	<u>Summary</u>	<u>Timeline</u>
Organic Growth	People can shelter in non-prohibited land or park spaces	Immediate with optional increased supports taking several months
No Encampments	People can shelter overnight but not stay during the day	2025
Designated Encampment Management	Designated sites with increased support	Fall 2024 before sites and supports in place
Housing	Investment in the creation of suitable supportive housing	Multiple years

Support for overcrowded encampments

- On site staff and supports
- Code of conduct
- Additional resources and services
- Strategy to address predatory criminal behaviour
- Place for people to go who refuse to follow the code of conduct

Civilian led response team

The highest impact we could have

- 24/7 behavioural issues response
- Team including mental health practitioner, social worker, and peer support
- Various supports and supplies to support in a variety of situations
- Opportunities for partners

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Lived experience

- Impact of encampments is broad, deep, and lasting
- Need for housing and permanent options
- Impact of large encampments
- Value of a civilian led response
- Maintain and support personal resilience

Unsolicited community feedback

- Don't reopen closed park spaces until there is no risk of reoccupation
- Reimagine park spaces
- Program them such that people cant shelter in them

Recommended actions

Immediate

- The Mayor write a letter to the Province requesting specific assistance as outlined in the report
- Continual referrals to existing and pending options
- Strengthen the list of places people are not allowed to shelter
- Dedicated resources from police could help in difficult circumstances
- Designation of other ready to use spaces to meet need
- *No encampment* approach in the long term

Recommended actions

Further actions

- Homelessness Summit
- Launch a civilian led response team
- Designation of non ready to use spaces, such as preparation of Bancroft and Marketplace site
- Managed encampment support for larger sites

- **It will take time to implement many of these options**
- **Cost no more that \$4,000,000 in 20204/2025 and just over \$6,000,000/year going forward**

Recommendations

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Strategic opportunities to address homelessness

HALIFAX