

Community Services

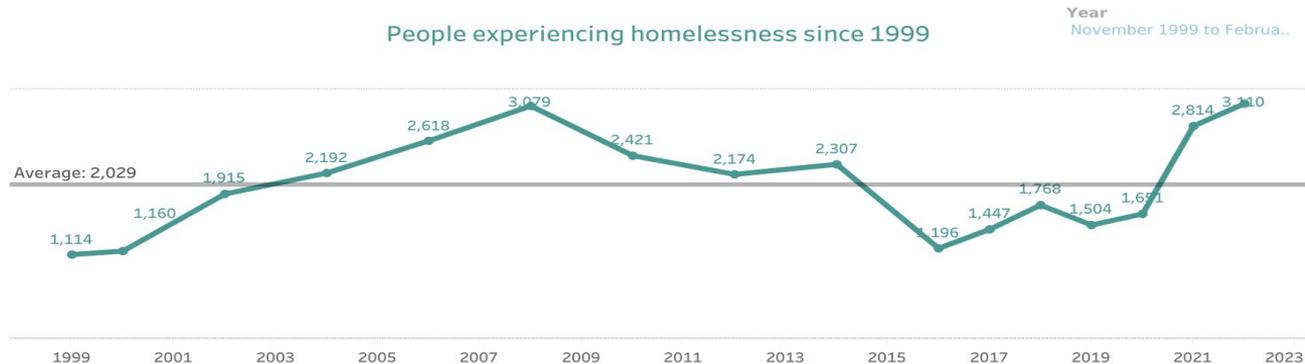
Edmonton

Homelessness and Encampment Response Strategy

Community and Public Services Committee
April 25, 2022

Unsheltered Homelessness in Edmonton

- Homelessness and unsheltered homelessness in Edmonton has increased significantly since the start of the pandemic
 - **2,810** ([By Name List](#) - March 2022) vs. **1551** (By Name List - March 2020)
 - Just under half of all people experiencing homelessness are staying in shelter or are unsheltered
 - **Encampment complaints to 311:**
 - **2016: 790**
 - **2018: 2,171**
 - **2021: 6,204**



2021 Encampment Strategy

Housing Focused Response
(low risk sites)

- Encampment Response Team will work to house rough sleepers

Accelerated Response
(higher risk sites)

- Faster closure
- EPS & Peace Officers will share shelter information and transportation options

Large Scale Response
(highest risk sites)

- Coordinated approach, combines elements of Accelerated and Housing Focused Response

Summer 2022

Context

- **634** available emergency shelter beds by June
 - ◆ 44% decrease from the **1,135** beds in place earlier this year
 - ◆ **715** - the average number of people accessing shelter through April-October 2021
 - ◆ 29% increase in number of people experiencing homelessness year over year

- We expect an increase in the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness due to shelters being at capacity.

Summer 2022

- In 2022, staff dedicated to support individuals in encampments include:
 - ◆ Nine street outreach workers (agency staff funded by the City);
 - ◆ Nine housing workers (agency staff funded by Homeward Trust);
 - ◆ Six Park Rangers;
 - ◆ Six EPS members; and
 - ◆ Fourteen labourers dedicated to clean-up (six during the winter)
 - ◆ A Special Downtown Waste Collection Team (14 employees) is also available to support encampment clean-up in the downtown area as needed.

- Comprehensive engagement process underway to determine the scope and focus of a new Indigenous-led outreach team

- The Coordinated Community Response to Homelessness (CCRH) Task Force pilot project

Summer 2022

	City-Funded Services
Day Services	- Bissell Centre: expanded hours and services
Drug Poisoning Response	- Boyle Street Community Services (Downtown) - Boyle McCauley Health Centre (McCauley) - Bissell Centre & The Mustard Seed (McCauley)
Public Washrooms	- Public Washroom Strategy
Bridge Housing	- Coliseum Inn (until May 31) - Sandy's Place - Sands Hotel
Extreme Weather	- City facilities for reprieve from heat - 15 water bottle-filling stations



Homelessness Supports in Edmonton



Evaluation and Continuous Improvement

Evaluation of the 2021 encampment response

- New response prevented encampments from becoming large-scale, but often simply displaced encampment occupants
 - ◆ Led to more small-scale encampments and higher clean-up costs
- Encampment closures could impede the goal of providing services and housing pathways while duplicating efforts of outreach workers
- Collaborative approach continues to improve, but encampment response teams are not adequately resourced
- Challenges with data management and coordination that impact assessment of strategic, operational and equity outcomes

Continuous Improvement: Short Term

- Engagement with encampment residents
- Engagement with residents of neighbourhoods and businesses
- Improvements to the matrix used to assess risk at the encampment sites
- Developing data sharing and standardization processes
- Continuing to encourage the adoption of minimum shelter standards to better equip shelters with the tools they need

Continuous Improvement: Medium-Term

Potential medium term investments:

- Improving coordination of multi-disciplinary efforts
 - ◆ if funded could include an improved dispatch model and additional supports for neighbourhoods, street outreach, and physical and mental health
- Developing Indigenous-led shelters, housing and programming
- A more comprehensive and timely approach to planning for Winter Emergency shelter this winter

Continuous Improvement: Long-Term

Increasing safe, adequate, and affordable housing with appropriate supports in all areas of the city:

- As of April 2022, 507 units of supportive housing have been supported by the City and are expected to be completed by the end of 2022
- To date the City has approved or committed to a total of 2,304 units towards its goal of 2,500 units of affordable housing.
- Co-creating an indigenous-led affordable housing strategy with partner organizations
- Administration is preparing a four-year investment plan based on permanent solutions of increased safe, adequate and affordable housing with appropriate supports in all areas of the city

Managed or Sanctioned Encampments

- Encampments legally permitted in single or multiple designated locations on public land or privately owned property
- Provide an interim solution to address the immediate conditions of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness.
- 2019 OrgCode Consulting Inc. recommendations around encampments:
 - ◆ strongly advised against tent-based sanctioned encampment areas.
In general,
 - ◆ large-scale encampments are seen as inadvisable

Next Steps

- Administration has 8 Council Reports coming to Council in June 2022:
 - ◆ City of Edmonton Minimum Emergency Shelter Standards
 - ◆ Affordable Housing - Tax Relief Parameters and Grant Mechanisms
 - ◆ Indigenous-led Shelters, Housing and Programming
 - ◆ Indigenous Affordable Housing Strategy
 - ◆ Edmonton's Approach to Supportive Housing
 - ◆ Housing Needs Assessment
 - ◆ Affordable Housing Contributions Approach (Inclusionary Housing)
 - ◆ Affordable Housing Investment Plan - Update

Thank you. Questions?