



BRIEFING NOTE HS23-22

For Information or For Approval

Date: May 25, 2022
Purpose: Encampment Response Information Update
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Alignment with Strategic Plan: Healthy, Sustainable Communities

Maximize Impact Remove Barriers Seamless Access Learn & Grow

Report HS23-22 provides an update on the Encampment Response Protocol for the District of Nipissing (DNSSAB) and is for information purposes.

BACKGROUND:

In July 2021, a task group was formed through the Nipissing District Homelessness and Housing Partnership (NDHHP) with a goal to proactively respond to encampments and individuals and households living unsheltered in the District. The group of community partners have met weekly since, to collaborate, track and plan responses to unsheltered homelessness within the District of Nipissing.

In March 2022, the task group identified that the season for encampments was beginning. The decision was made to invite attendance at a focused task group meeting that would include input from authorities managing lands and properties throughout the Nipissing District, as well as police, public health, and agencies that provide outreach and support for vulnerable populations.

Attendance included the North Bay Mattawa Conservation Authority (NBMCA), the City of North Bay (CNB), the District of Nipissing Social Services Administration Board (DNSSAB), Canadian Mental Health Association- North Bay and District (CMHA-NBD), True Self, the Aids Committee of North Bay and Area (ACNBA), North Bay Fire Emergency Services (NBFES) and the North Bay Parry Sound District Health Unit (NBPSDHU).

CURRENT STATUS/STEPS TAKEN TO DATE:

The goals of the meetings were to:

1. Establish a District-wide protocol for proactive response to encampments
2. Identify land areas/locations where encampments will not be permitted
3. Identify land areas/locations where camping is permitted

4. Determine how encampments will be identified, tracked and occupants supported to connect with housing options

The NBMCA has an existing protocol that was established several years ago with CMHA-NBD (formerly NMHHSS) that is still used within North Bay for individuals discovered camping on conservation or city owned property.

The final draft protocol was shared with the full task group in May with implementation in June.

It was determined that encampments will not be permitted on the following:

- Conservation Authority land
- City parks or city owned properties
- Social Housing property
- Ontario Northland properties

The protocol for unauthorized encampments will connect authorities to the appropriate community agencies. Agency staff will make contact with the individuals in the encampments, notify them of the timeframe for vacating the location, offer alternative options and connect them, if appropriate, with the By-Name List (BNL) and Coordinated Access Nipissing (CAN) processes. Referrals from land authorities within North Bay will go to CMHA-NBD and referrals outside of North Bay will be directed to True Self.

The task group noted that camping is permitted for up to 21 days on Crown Land and that this may be an alternative for individuals who wish to camp over the summer.

There was acknowledgement that the Unsheltered Task Group would continue to meet for protocol and response planning to look at alternative locations, services and supports for individuals and households that continue to prefer to be outdoors during the summer rather than in shelter beds or other housing options.

RESOURCES REQUIRED:

Responses to encampments on public lands may require resources to relocate the individuals or households to other locations and for outreach workers to respond to situations throughout the District.

RISK IDENTIFICATION AND MITIGATION:

Capacity issues within the shelter system and limited 24/7 alternatives for individuals experiencing homelessness during the summer months continues. New transitional and permanent housing options that will be opening this summer will provide some longer-term solutions.

CONCLUSION:

The DNSSAB, Community Advisory Board (CAB) and other community partners will implement a District-wide protocol to proactively respond to encampments that are identified on unauthorized lands. This protocol will provide connections to the BNL and CAN and allow for the ongoing tracking of homelessness within the District.

Alternative solutions for individuals and households that are identified as living unsheltered and homeless will also continue to be pursued.