

## **Appendix I Homeless Encampment Policies and Joint Protocols**

### **Current Responses to Homeless Encampments in Peel Region**

As a response to the homelessness crisis and significant increase in encampments, the Region, together with its partners, has committed to creating a council-endorsed homeless encampment policy and joint protocols that will incorporate a human rights-based approach. The first meeting of the Peel Encampment Working Group and its steering committee was held on April 12, 2024. The working group met again on April 18. The deliverables of the working group will ensure that services, supports, data, and information are shared between multiple stakeholders in a coordinated approach that will mitigate the risks of service system pressures, clarify roles and expectations, and create consistent responses to encampments across Peel Region.

Until the policy and protocols are complete, key stakeholders in Peel, including the Region, local municipalities, Peel Regional Police, and community agencies currently respond to homeless encampments using a variety of approaches. Work on the policy and joint protocols will enhance the coordination of current practices, communication strategies and supports for residents.

#### **a) Region of Peel**

Peel currently provides a street homelessness outreach service with two mobile teams, one for Brampton and one for Mississauga and Caledon, and a place-based team in Mississauga. This service is contracted out to CMHA Peel-Dufferin and includes a 24/7 Street helpline. The program provides on-location services across the Region of Peel that include providing hygiene products, food, and other supplies, as well as referrals to shelter and other supports. In addition, Peel funds the Welcoming Streets pilot program in downtown Brampton.

Through the *Housing Services Act*, the Region is the Service Manager for housing and homelessness in Peel. As Service Manager, the Region funds and provides programs for services such as the ownership and oversight of emergency shelters, housing subsidies, and case management. The Region also funds health care services for people experiencing homelessness. The Region does not participate in dismantling encampments.

Until the policy and joint protocols are complete, the Region is using several measures to support the response to homeless encampments. These measures include:

- frequent meetings with local municipal staff, Peel Outreach, and others;
- providing regular updates to Regional Council;
- following Peel's shelter admission standards initiated since our 'do not turn away policy' had to be lifted. We are working hard to place clients experiencing homelessness into hotels when emergency shelters are full wherever possible;
- exploring how to make shelters more accessible to clients, such as being pet friendly;
- diverting asylum claimants to specific emergency shelter locations;
- requesting an expansion to the Welcoming Streets program area in order to support businesses surrounding Calvert Park;
- working to enhance the current Peel Outreach Program; and,
- creating a place-based outreach team for South Mississauga to support residents and businesses in Cooksville and Port Credit.

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#### **b) City of Brampton**

The City of Brampton coordinates monthly meetings with partners to discuss safety matters in parks across the City of Brampton, and conducts regular patrols of parks to maintain safety and security. The City also coordinates weekly walk-throughs of encampments to conduct wellness checks, provide information on existing community resources, and ensure fire safety. The City is currently exploring an interim solution for encampments along the Etobicoke Creek Trail affected by flood risk.

#### **c) City of Mississauga**

The City of Mississauga facilitates referrals to Street Helpline as a primary resource and support for those who are unhoused. City staff also respond or attend to locations where encampments are present on a case-by-case basis, and the City delivers supportive services for individuals experiencing homelessness in collaboration with the Region of Peel and other community organizations.

#### **d) Town of Caledon**

While encampments are not a significant concern in Caledon at present, staff are preparing for significant growth and looking at policies that address urban issues.

#### **e) Peel Regional Police**

Peel Regional police actively engage and build rapport with people living in encampments. In Brampton, police collaborate with Fire, Parks, and Corporate Security, and in Mississauga, with Fire. The Divisional Mobilization Unit conducts weekly checks, provides or connects residents with community partners such as Peel Outreach, PAARC, CMHA, and emergency shelters, and distributes donated items such as clothing and food. The Community Intervention and Response Team also regularly attends encampments and enforces safety measures related to complaints, warrants, and public safety concerns.

#### **f) Community Agencies**

The Canadian Mental Health Association of Peel-Dufferin operates Peel Outreach, which includes 24/7 operation of the Street Helpline. Peel Outreach has mobile teams that provide on-location supplies, supports, access to shelter, and referrals to people experiencing street homelessness throughout Peel. Moyo Health & Community Services also provides outreach services. Organizations such as Regeneration, the Open Window Hub and The Compass Food Bank in Brampton and Mississauga, respectively, provide drop-in services and supports to people experiencing homelessness and/or precarious housing.