

Appendix H

City Of Toronto Interdepartmental Service Protocol For Homeless People Camping In Public Spaces

This document sets out the interdepartmental protocol intended to guide City staff in providing outreach services to homeless individuals camping outside in public spaces to assist them access permanent solutions, prior to the enforcement of City by-laws which may cause their displacement and the removal of their belongings.

Outreach Services to Assist Homeless People in Public Places: Overview and Goals:

The goal of the City outreach initiative is to assist and encourage people currently camping in public spaces to access safer and healthier alternatives to living outside, including housing, support services and shelter. The initiative also seeks to balance the need to provide appropriate supports to vulnerable individuals camping in public spaces with the civic responsibility of maintaining the use of public spaces for public use.

The outreach initiative to homeless persons provides a more intensive, proactive and coordinated effort among City departments. Outreach efforts to the homeless also include connecting and co-ordinating the activities of relevant community and government agencies to access a mix of supports and resources, streamline access to services, and avoid duplication of effort.

The outreach initiative provides the co-ordination and delivery of human services prior to any enforcement activities related to public spaces, such as removal of unauthorized structures, personal goods and debris. In many circumstances it is anticipated that given the appropriate outreach and supports over time, individuals will be assisted in securing better alternatives than sleeping outside and will voluntarily vacate public spaces making enforcement unnecessary.

To respond to the needs of homeless individuals, the outreach initiative is delivered on a case-by-case basis and focused on a site-by-site approach. Staff efforts will focus on larger sites where more people are in need of assistance, where there are encampments, and where there are safety concerns. Staff efforts will also seek to address the needs of single individuals camped in parks, public transit shelters and city streets.

City Service Principles:

The following five principles guide the initiative:

- (1) The City is committed to working with homeless individuals living outside to respond to their individual needs on a case-by-case basis by assisting them access services and supports, including permanent housing.
- (2) The City will use a co-ordinated approach between City departments in responding to the needs and issues related to homeless people camping outside. Activities will also be

co-ordinated with community agencies to access a mix of supports and resources, streamline access to services, and avoid duplication of effort.

- (3) The City will engage in ongoing proactive communication with homeless individuals, the public, service providers, community agencies and other groups to assist in the successful implementation of the protocol.
- (4) The City priority is to assist homeless people access safer, sustainable, and healthier alternatives than living outside, not enforcement. Enforcement will occur after all support efforts have been attempted without success, provided that the individual has been notified that he or she is required to vacate a public space. In the event of exceptional circumstances, however, intervention may be required to address immediate public safety concerns.
- (5) The City acknowledges that homeless individuals cannot be forced to accept services and supports. However, the refusal of an individual to accept services and supports is not sufficient reason to prevent the enforcement of City by-laws prohibiting camping in public places and erecting structures.

Program Delivery:

The outreach initiative provides intense street outreach supports to homeless people and, only when necessary, enforcement and removal activities.

City departments involved in human service programming such as Shelter, Housing and Support, Social Services and Public will participate in the outreach initiative, with SHS having the lead role. As part of this process the initiative will focus and prioritize the provision of human services including street outreach, drop-ins, shelters, income support, housing access, and related support services.

City departments with enforcement responsibilities include Works and Emergency Services, Parks and Recreation, and Facilities and Real Estate. Enforcement activities will depend upon the success of outreach activities, the need for such services, the location of the site, and the department responsible.

Focused Outreach:

- (1) The City will be proactive in responding to the needs of homeless people living outside. Locations where outreach services are needed will be identified by Shelter, Housing and Support, Works and Emergency Services, Parks and Recreation and other City departments and agencies.
- (2) The Shelter, Housing and Support Division will co-ordinate the delivery of outreach services and conduct needs assessments of individuals who are sleeping outside at specific sites. The needs assessment will include identification of community agencies working with the individual or who should be requested to assist.

- (3) Each individual will be offered assistance, as required, to access health, mental health, addiction and family reunification services, income support, housing and supportive housing options, and shelter and outreach services.
- (4) Through the work of Shelter, Housing and Support staff and other community support agencies, homeless individuals will be offered personal, timed and regular street outreach to assist in moving from living outside and securing better alternatives in advance of any enforcement activities.

Notification and Enforcement of Public Space:

- (1) Shelter, Housing and Support will coordinate efforts to provide services for homeless people provided by community agencies and other City departments, including Public Health and Social Services and will work closely with Works and Emergency Services, Parks and Recreation, Facilities and Real Estate and other departments to ensure that the timing of enforcement activities does not conflict with the outreach efforts.
- (2) Works and Emergency Services, Parks and Recreation, Facilities and Real Estate and other City departments and agencies are responsible for providing notice to individuals that camping is to be discontinued and that personal goods, debris and structures are to be cleared from a public space or right of way.
- (3) Notices will be given to individuals in advance. The timing of issuing notices will be determined in consultation with Shelter, Housing and Support staff. Formal enforcement notices will provide relevant and clear communication to the individual. In addition, site specific information notices for each location will be attached to provide a list of resources to provide individuals with information regarding access to housing, support services and shelter in the area.
- (4) When public space enforcement activities are initiated by a City department. Shelter, Housing and Support outreach staff will at all times accompany enforcement officers to continue providing supports to individuals who up to that point had not accepted outreach services.
- (5) Where deemed necessary, by-law enforcement officers will co-ordinate activities with the Toronto Police Service to maintain the safety of staff and individuals still at the site.

Appendix I – Implementation of the Interdepartmental Protocol of Homeless Persons Camping in Public Spaces (February 1, 2005 – November 30, 2005)

Location	Comments
Spadina Bridge (Ward 20)	There were four youth living under the Spadina Bridge in February 2005. Three of the youth were housed and one left the City. The site was cleared by Transportation Services in March 2005.
Bathurst Bridge (Ward 20)	There were fifteen “traveling” youth under the bridge in May 2005. This is the same site that was cleared in 2004. All of the youth initially refused housing and left the City. Throughout the summer and fall, some of the youth returned to the City. Eight of these youth have been housed by Streets to Homes. The site was cleared by Transportation Services in June 2005.
60 Harbour (Ward 28)	Streets to Homes staff began working at this site in March 2005. There were eight people staying at the site. Two of the eight refused all services. The remaining six were housed by Streets to Homes. The site was cleared by Transportation Services in June 2005.
Dundas/DVP (Ward 30)	There were three individuals living in an encampment along the side of the embankment. One of these individuals was housed. The other two accepted shelter services. The site was cleared by Transportation Services in June 2005.
Eastern Avenue/DVP (1 st time) (Ward 30)	There was one individual living in an encampment on the site. The individual declined all services and vacated the site. The site was cleared by Transportation Services in June 2005.
Yorkdale Parkette (Ward 15)	There was one individual staying in a tent in Yorkdale Parkette. The individual declined numerous apartments and is on the waiting list for TCHC housing. The individual vacated the site. The site was cleared by Parks, Forestry and Recreation in July 2005.
Wellesley Park (Ward 28)	There were three individuals living in an encampment in Wellesley Park. All three were housed by Streets to Homes. The site was cleared by Parks, Forestry and Recreation in September 2005.
Coronation Park (1st time) (Ward 19)	There was one individual staying in Coronation Park. He declined services from Streets to Homes, but was successful in making his own housing arrangements. The site was cleared by Parks, Forestry and Recreation in October 2005.
G Ross Lord Park (Ward 8)	There was one individual living in a trailer in G Ross Lord Park. He has now secured housing in York Region. The site was cleared by Parks, Forestry and Recreation in October 2005.
Gerrard Bridge/DVP (Ward 30)	There was one individual consistently residing in the buttress of the bridge. The individual declined all services. The individual vacated the site, and the site was cleared by Transportation Services in October 2005.

Eastern Avenue/DVP (2 nd time) (Ward 30)	There were two individuals living on the site in separate encampments. One individual vacated the site voluntarily prior to clearing. The other individual worked with Streets to Homes staff and then was able to secure her own accommodation. The site was cleared by Transportation Services in October 2005.
Wellington Yard (Ward 19)	The Wellington Yard is an unused City building on Wellington Street that needed to be secured for reasons of building safety. There were four individuals living inside the building. One of these individuals has been housed by Streets to Homes and another is in the process of being housed. Two other individuals refused services and left the site voluntarily. The building was secured in November 2005.
Coronation Park (2 nd time) (Ward 19)	There was a couple living in Coronation Park. They voluntarily vacated the site shortly after notice was posted. The site was cleared by Parks, Forestry and Recreation in November 2005.
Wilket's Creek Park (Ward 25)	There was one individual living in a tent in Wilket's Creek Park. The individual declined all services and vacated the site soon after posting. Streets to Homes has learned that the individual successfully secured housing on their own. The site was cleared by Parks, Forestry and Recreation in November 2005.
Rosedale Subway Station (Ward 27)	There were three individuals living on Parks, Forestry and Recreation property near the Rosedale Subway Station. Two of the individuals were housed and one individual declined all services and voluntarily left the site. The site was cleared by Parks, Forestry and Recreation in November 2005.
Bloor/Huntley (Ward 27)	There was one individual living under the bridge at Bloor and Huntley. The individual declined all services and vacated the site at the time the site was cleared. The site was cleared by Transportation Services in November 2005.
Bloor/Mount Pleasant (Ward 27)	There were two individuals living under the bridge at Bloor and Mount Pleasant. Both declined all offers of assistance and vacated the site. The site was cleared by Transportation Services in November 2005.