



City of Prince Albert

RPT 2026-107

TITLE: Prince Albert's Encampments Strategy – Reaching Home Funding Agreement 2026-2027

DATE: April 20, 2026

TO: City Council

PUBLIC: X

INCAMERA:

RECOMMENDATION:

1. That the grant agreement in the amount of \$208,095.10 between The City and Riverbank Development Corporation for the CSWB Division to continue coordinating the Encampment Response Plan developed for homelessness and encampment initiatives be approved; and,
2. That the Mayor and City Clerk be authorized to execute the Agreement and any necessary documents on behalf of The City.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY:

Unsheltered homelessness continues to increase in Prince Albert, as demonstrated by the 2024 and 2025 Point-in-Time (PiT) Counts, which identified a rise in both overall homelessness and individuals residing in encampments. In response, The City implemented a coordinated Encampment Response Strategy during the 2025–2026 period, supported by external funding and formalized through Council approval of federal funding via a Grant Agreement with Riverbank Development Corporation.

The initial funding enabled a strengthened, partnership-based approach to encampment response, including enhanced coordination by the Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Division, increased outreach capacity through the Prince Albert Métis Women's Association, deployment of a mobile Hygiene Hub, and adoption of the federal Homelessness Information System (HiFiS) to improve data sharing and service coordination. These measures contributed to improved access to services, reduced public health risks, increased connections to shelter and housing supports, and proactive mitigation of safety risks in high-impact encampment areas.

Building on these outcomes, The City has secured funding to sustain the Encampment Strategy for 2026–2027. The proposed approach continues the coordinated, inter-agency model involving CSWB, outreach partners, Bylaw Services, Prince Albert Fire Department, and Prince Albert Police Service. Key activities include ongoing outreach and engagement, continued operation of the mobile Hygiene Hub, proactive public safety

and fire risk mitigation, and enhanced data collection and reporting through HiFiS to support accountability and inform future funding decisions.

Internal planning is underway to prepare for Spring and Summer 2026, including cross-departmental coordination and preventative remediation of high-risk areas. This sustained, data-informed approach balances public safety, public health, and community well-being while supporting individuals experiencing homelessness in accessing services, shelter, and housing.

BACKGROUND:

The 2024 Point-in-Time (PiT) Count in Prince Albert identified two-hundred and thirty (230) individuals experiencing homelessness. Of those who participated, one-hundred and six (106) individuals were unsheltered, meaning they were not couch-surfing, accessing a shelter, or residing in transitional housing, and sixty-four (64) individuals reported staying in an encampment. In 2025, the PiT Count identified two-hundred and seventy-nine (279) individuals experiencing homelessness, of whom one-hundred and sixty-seven (167) were unsheltered, demonstrating a continued increase in unsheltered homelessness within the community.

In 2025, The City received funding to formalize and implement an Encampment Response Plan in partnership with community agencies. On March 24, 2025, Council approved Motion No. 0090, which authorized:

- 1. Approval of a Grant Agreement between The City and Riverbank Development Corporation for the Community Safety and Well-Being (CSWB) Division to coordinate and implement the Encampment Response Plan in the amount of \$500,000; and*
- 2. Authorization for the Mayor and City Clerk to execute the Agreement and any related documents on behalf of The City.*

Between April 2025 and March 2026, this funding supported the following activities:

- Additional Bylaw Officer II capacity to coordinate bi-weekly partnership meetings and support a joint response to encampments;
- The purchase and operation of portable washrooms (the “Hygiene Hub”), which operated from August to early December 2025, Monday to Friday between 9:00 a.m. and 3:00 p.m., and was staffed by outreach workers;
- Increased outreach capacity through the Prince Albert Métis Women’s Association; and,
- Access to the federal Homelessness Information System (HiFiS), a data collection and case management platform that enables service providers to share real-time local homelessness data, supporting coordinated referrals and prioritization of services.

Outcomes associated with the 2025–2026 activities include:

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- The Hygiene Hub serving more than 50 individuals daily between August and November, with anecdotal reports indicating a reduction in human waste within encampments and public areas;
 - Increased connections to services, including transportation to emergency shelters and support from housing intake workers;
 - Weekly collaboration with the Sexual Health Clinic, which reported positive public health outcomes among service users;
 - Bylaw Services responding to over 408 encampments, and, in partnership with the Prince Albert Fire Department, Prince Albert Police Service, and outreach providers, proactively addressing high-risk areas through preventative measures such as bush thinning and mulching in encampment “hot spot” locations.

The Encampments Strategy is attached and outlines the coordinated, partnership-based approach adopted by CSWB and its partner agencies. The City has since been successful in securing funding for the 2026–2027 period to sustain the Encampment Strategy activities.

PROPOSED APPROACH AND RATIONALE:

Under the Agreement, The City of Prince Albert will continue to coordinate activities and communications across the inter-agency Encampment Response Team. This work will be undertaken in partnership with the Prince Albert Métis Women’s Association, which will provide enhanced outreach services to improve individuals’ access to supports, including basic needs, shelter, and housing services.

The Agreement also supports the continued operation of the mobile Hygiene Hub, which is intended to support individuals in maintaining dignity and well-being while addressing public health concerns associated with encampments. This proactive initiative creates opportunities for consistent engagement with outreach workers and increases the likelihood that individuals are prepared and supported to transition into sheltered accommodation and other services.

Partnerships with Bylaw Services, the Prince Albert Police Service, and the Prince Albert Fire Department will remain central to the encampment response, ensuring that public safety, risk mitigation, and community well-being continue to be prioritized in all encampment-related activities.

The City will continue to use the Encampments Module within the Homelessness Information System (HiFiS) to track activity and outcomes, support enhanced reporting to the federal government, and inform future community funding decisions. This data-driven approach also enables community partners to provide more coordinated and effective support to individuals accessing housing and homelessness services in Prince Albert.

Internal planning to prepare for the Spring and Summer 2026 seasons is underway. Bylaw Services and the Prince Albert Fire Department have collaborated to use drone technology to identify dense bush areas where encampments have remained hidden or inaccessible during winter months. This work is being used to inform remediation planning through a public safety and risk-based lens.

An internal, cross-departmental meeting has already taken place, and plans are in place to thin and mulch high-priority, high-risk areas as soon as weather and ground conditions permit.

The mobile Hygiene Hub is anticipated to be operational by the end of April, subject to weather conditions, and bi-weekly Encampment Response Team meetings continue to support coordinated planning and response efforts.

CONSULTATIONS:

The Community Safety and Well-Being Division engaged with key community partners, including the Prince Albert Métis Women's Association, the Prince Albert Fire Department, and the Prince Albert Police Service, during the development of the funding application to confirm support for sustaining the 2025–2026 encampment response approach.

The proposed funding agreement was reviewed with the Finance Department to ensure alignment with reporting and accountability requirements. Consultation also occurred with Public Works and Parks, Recreation, and Culture to confirm continued operational support and coordination for a cross-departmental approach to encampment response activities.

COMMUNICATION AND/OR ANNOUNCEMENT PLAN:

The attached encampments strategy document will be published on the CSWB landing page on The City's website, and the partnership will continue to communicate via established channels with partner agencies, and across departments.

CSWB have been working with communications to provide community updates and encourage members of the public to report encampments online, which enables Bylaw Officers to see them in the field Monday – Friday, 8am – 4:30pm.

BUDGET/FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS:

The funding will sustain increased capacity for the CSWB team to continue coordinating an inter-agency response to encampments. The City will also redirect funding, according to the Agreement, to the Prince Albert Metis Women's Association to continue providing enhanced, coordinated outreach services.

The agreement includes \$20,000 of in-kind services which is for the use of the existing portable washrooms, although there is additional funding for maintenance costs throughout the season.

OTHER CONSIDERATIONS/IMPLICATIONS:

It is worth noting that there is a cost associated with any funding agreement in terms of compliance burden, workload associated with reporting, financial reconciliation risk, and audit exposure. These are relatively minor when compared with the total value of this agreement but should be recognized as a "trade-off" when entering into grant or contribution agreements.

OPTIONS TO RECOMMENDATION:

That the Agreement is not approved. This option was not chosen because encampments are an ongoing challenge for municipalities that require resource allocation across Bylaw, Sanitation, Policing, Parks, and Fire. A coordinated encampment response supports improved community outcomes by addressing public health concerns, reducing environmental impacts, and improving access to services, while recognizing the ongoing challenges associated with homelessness in the community.

STRATEGIC PLAN:

This report speaks to several priorities in the 2026-2029 Strategic Plan, in particular: (Strategic Direction – Promoting a Progressive Community) Strategic Goal 1: Formalize and implement the City’s Community Safety and Well-Being Initiatives: Provide support to community partners in their response to social and economic issues within the city.

OFFICIAL COMMUNITY PLAN:

Addressing homelessness through collaborative efforts addresses section 12 of the Official Community Plan by contributing towards public safety.

PUBLIC NOTICE:

Public Notice pursuant to the Public Notice Bylaw No. 24 of 2015 is not required.

ATTACHMENTS:

COPA 2026-2027 Contract
City of Prince Albert’s Encampment Strategy

Written by: Anna Dinsdale, Community Safety and Well-Being Manager

Approved by: Acting Director, Community Development & Acting City Manager