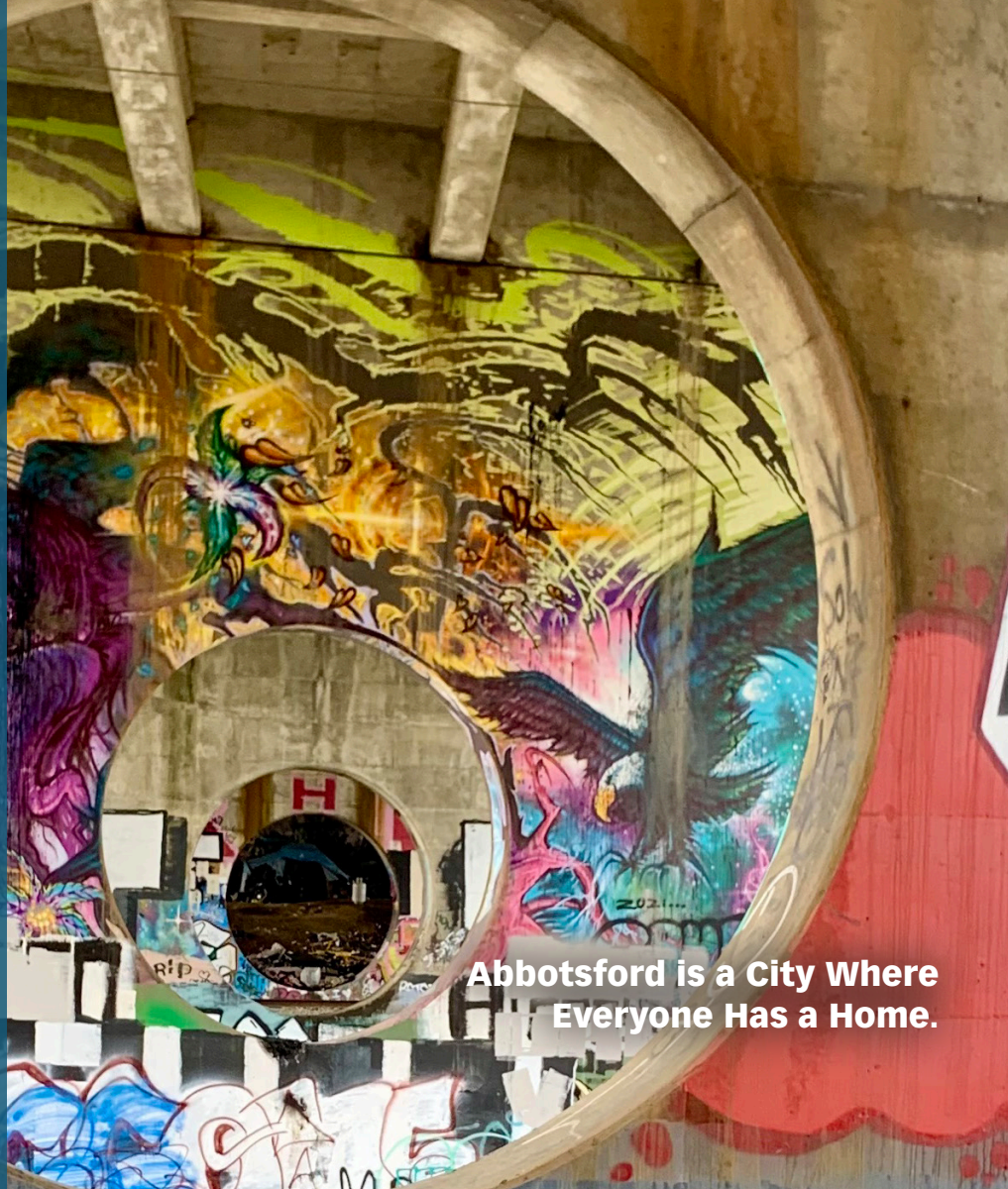




HOMELESSNESS
ACTION PLAN
executive
summary 2022



**Abbotsford is a City Where
Everyone Has a Home.**



Mayor's Message

Message from Henry Braun

Homelessness is more than sleeping rough. It includes people who are without shelter, in emergency and temporary accommodation, and living temporarily in severely overcrowded accommodation. In 2014, the City of Abbotsford committed to supporting homelessness in our community through a Housing First approach and ensuring that everyone in Abbotsford has a home.

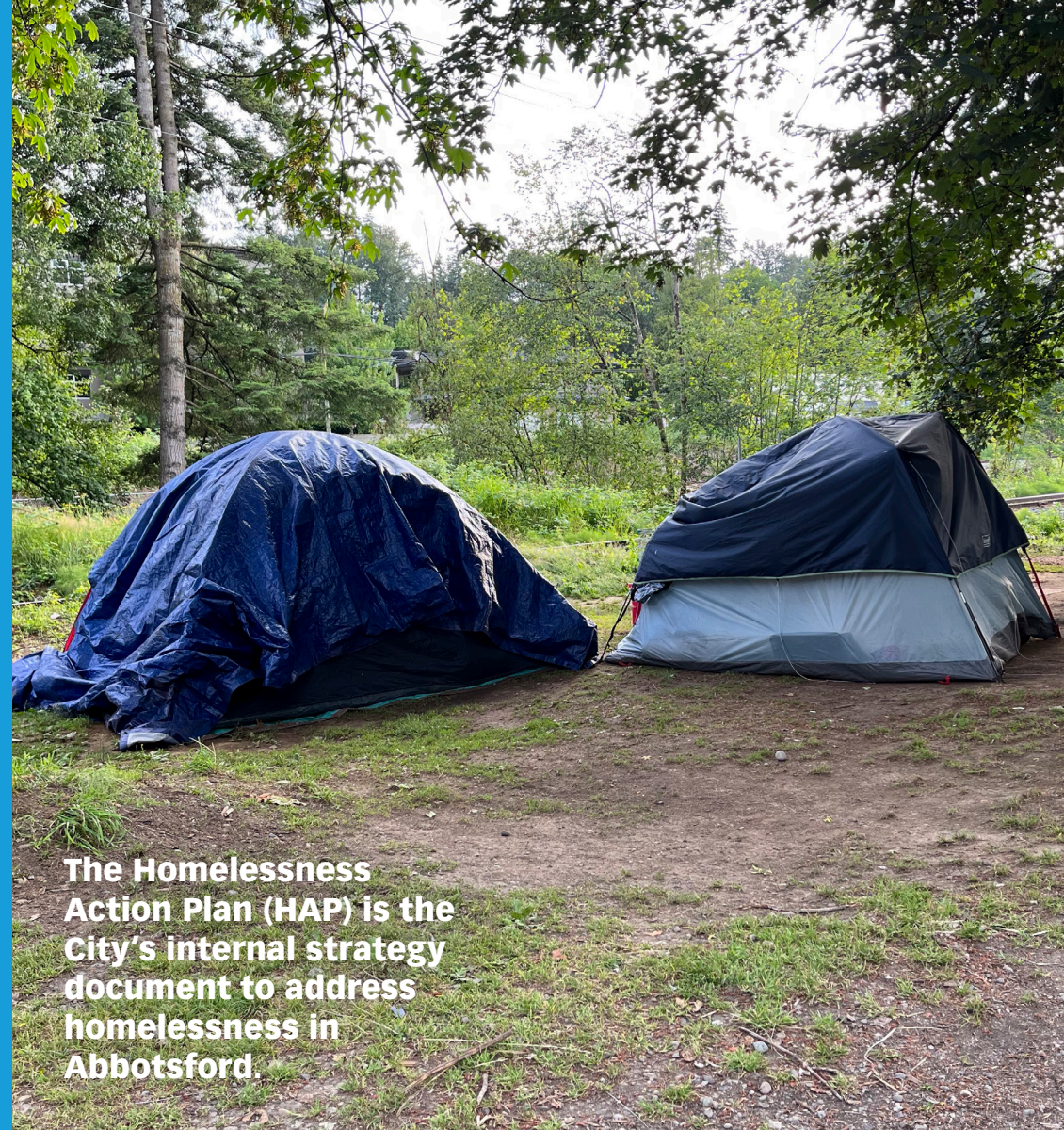
This 2022 Homelessness Action Plan updates the work that has been done since 2014 and provides an overarching framework with immediate and longer-term actions to prevent and reduce homelessness throughout our community.

As part of this plan, the City will continue working with senior levels of government and wider community partners to prevent homelessness from occurring in the first place. This means working closely together to support individuals, families and vulnerable residents at risk of experiencing homelessness at crucial points, such as insecure tenancies, leaving prison or hospital. Where homelessness occurs, individuals, families and vulnerable residents need quick access to stable housing and support services to stay housed and improve wellbeing.

Homelessness in Abbotsford will not be solved overnight and not by government working alone. This is why we remain committed to working with our local service providers, individuals, families and social service agencies in our community to build on the progress we've collectively made to date.

Our sincere thanks to everyone who has contributed and supported the update of our Homelessness in Abbotsford Action Plan.

Henry Braun
Mayor



The Homelessness Action Plan (HAP) is the City's internal strategy document to address homelessness in Abbotsford.



Executive Summary

Vision

Abbotsford is a city where everyone has a home.

The Homelessness Action Plan (HAP) is the City's internal strategy document to address homelessness in Abbotsford. It includes immediate actions and future initiatives to be led or supported by the City.

Foundation

Abbotsford's Homelessness Action Plan was informed by:

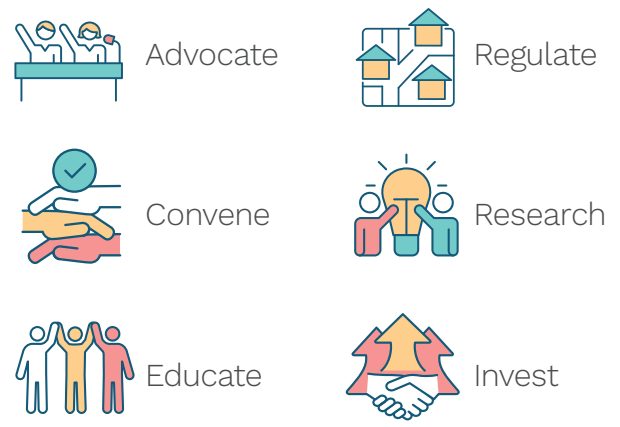
- Data on homelessness and services
- Interviews and focus groups with stakeholders
- Interviews with individuals with lived experience of homelessness
- An internal review with staff across multiple departments
- Review of current practices in other communities
- Abbotsford's established and ongoing housing & homelessness initiatives



Roles of the City in Homelessness

Distinct Roles




All levels of government have distinct roles to play in responding to homelessness in our communities. Setting directions and goals through a Homelessness Action Plan is one way municipalities can plan for how to work with senior levels of government to address community needs. The actions set by Abbotsford's HAP carve out important roles for the City to play:

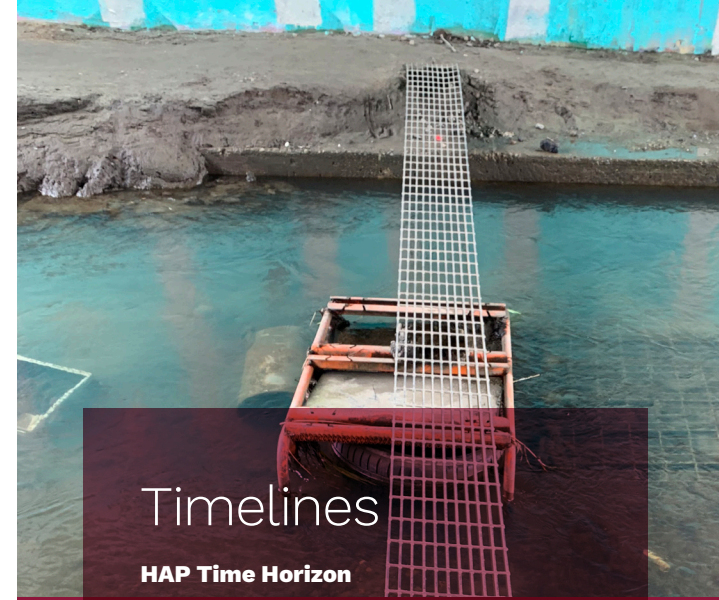


Goals of Abbotsford's Homelessness Action Plan

Five High-Level Goals

There are five high-level goals in the Plan. Each goal has corresponding actions which are summarized over the next pages.

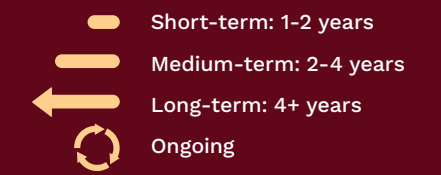
-  **Goal 1**
Strengthen Community-Based Services and Programs
-  **Goal 2**
Enhance Abbotsford's Internal Responses to Homelessness by Strengthening Policy, Developing Staff Capacity, and Augmenting the Use of City Facilities to Address Homelessness
-  **Goal 3**
Coordinate and Convene Service and Housing Providers to Strengthen Responses to Homelessness in Abbotsford
-  **Goal 4**
Advocate for Stronger Federal and Provincial Support
-  **Goal 5**
Develop and Implement New Strategies for Better Tracking, Understanding and Communicating Progress on Homelessness



Timelines

HAP Time Horizon

The HAP has time horizon of 5-7 years. A range of short and long-term approaches are needed to address homelessness. Each action has an associated timeline.



Goal 1



Goal 1 Strengthen Community-Based Services and Programs

More than 100 community organizations provide direct or indirect services to people experiencing homelessness in Abbotsford. Community organizations lead essential services that the City can support.

What We Heard

There are gaps in community-based services and underserved demographics, which the City can help fill. The City can help address these gaps through funding opportunities, advocacy, and offering capacity and support.

Identify land in Abbotsford for new affordable housing projects

1.1
Short-Term

Build on the work undertaken in the City's Land Strategy to determine how the City's land assets may be able to be utilized to support the development of additional affordable housing projects in the community.

1.2
Medium-Term

Work with internal/external partners to identify properties and locations that may be underutilized or vacant and suitable for affordable housing and/or other supports (e.g. surplus Ministry of Transportation and Infrastructure lands, non-profit & faith community lands).

Explore ways for the City to assist community-based services in providing supports that are culturally-responsive

1.3
Short-Term
& Ongoing

Conduct a needs assessment on the City's role in strengthening culturally-responsive services and supports, and continue to advocate for additional resources to strengthen the delivery of these services.

Build partnerships to support research, capacity building and education projects

1.4
Ongoing

Tackle root causes of homelessness and enhance the City's role in supporting work that addresses these issues by creating partnerships with institutional partners (e.g. SD34, UFV School of Social Work).

Help community-based services access funding

1.5
Ongoing

Monitor and communicate funding opportunities to community service providers to ensure timely responses.



Goal 2



Goal 2 Enhance Abbotsford's Internal Responses to Homelessness

by Strengthening Policy, Developing Staff Capacity, and Augmenting the Use of City Facilities to Address Homelessness

What We Heard

There are areas where the City can leverage its policies, programs, and influence to help address homelessness. Community partners need suitable spaces to deliver their programs and identified the need for basic facilities for individuals experiencing homelessness (such as washrooms).

The City can play a key role as a communicator and educator with residents and businesses. This can help address concerns of businesses and residents while also supporting the work of community-based service providers.

Strengthen the City's policies and programs to better meet the needs of individuals experiencing homelessness

2.1
Ongoing

Ensure the needs of individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness will be considered and reflected in any upcoming City bylaw and policy updates (e.g., Zoning Bylaw update).

2.2
Medium-Term

Explore opportunities and review how City-owned facilities and other assets could support individuals experiencing homelessness to meet their basic needs (e.g., washrooms, daytime warming programs, etc.)

2.3
Medium-Term

Review/update the City's Emergency Response Plans (i.e. Severe Weather Response) to ensure that the needs of individuals at risk of or experiencing homelessness are included in City response initiatives.

Assist affordable and supportive housing projects through City processes

2.4
Short-Term

Monitor the impact of pre-zoning and other incentives for supportive housing and other types of deeply affordable housing in other jurisdictions and determine whether it is feasible/desirable to implement in Abbotsford.

2.5
Short to Medium-Term

Explore opportunities to prioritize affordable housing projects where the City and/or senior governments are a partner.

2.6
Short to Medium-Term

Explore the use of the Affordable Housing Reserve to fund priority affordable housing projects.



Invest in City staff's capacity and ability to address homelessness

2.7
Short-Term & Ongoing

Ensure that City staff are adequately trained and supported to provide services to residents experiencing homelessness.

2.8
Short-Term

Consider a Strategic Initiative and Opportunity (SIO) to increase capacity to support the implementation of the Homelessness Action Plan and the Reaching Home Program.



Partner and engage with residents and businesses

2.9
Short-Term

Increase opportunities to work with the Business Engagement Ambassador Program (BEAP) to enhance engagement with businesses impacted by homelessness and work with them to address their concerns.

2.10
Short to Medium-Term

In partnership with community organizations, regularly engage with residents throughout the City with the aim of creating a culture of understanding across the broader community.

2.11
Medium to Long-term

Work with service providers and landlords to develop a landlord liaison program, supporting access to market rental housing for individuals at risk of or experiencing of homelessness.

Goal 3



Goal 3 Coordinate and Convene Service and Housing Providers

to Strengthen Responses to Homelessness in Abbotsford

All levels of government, as well as community-based service providers need to work together to provide the necessary health, employment, and housing supports to meet both, short-term basic needs of individuals experiencing homelessness, and support successful transitions out of homelessness.

What We Heard

“Homelessness is a very divisive problem [...] we all want safety across the board; bringing everyone together: that’s when you can really have some transformative conversations and I would love for the City to host some of these conversations” - Cyrus Centre

Bring government, frontline, and community-based services together through regular communications and meetings

3.1
Ongoing

Convene regular meetings of frontline stakeholders and service-provider organizations to create a more coordinated system of care.

3.2
Ongoing

Continue to support ongoing efforts around collaboration and coordination on service delivery in the community, including funding applications.

3.3
Ongoing

Continue to work with City Bylaw and Abbotsford Police Department to ensure that all necessary supports for vulnerable people are provided and coordinated in the course of enforcement.

3.4
Short-Term & Ongoing

Strengthen relationships between community-based organizations and health services to ensure a continuity of care.



Goal 4



Goal 4

Advocate for Stronger Federal and Provincial Support


What We Heard

Abbotsford's organizations have experienced some notable successes in responding to homelessness that are often not known or leveraged. The City can play a role in communicating outcomes and advocating for more funding to continue to address homelessness.

Highlight Abbotsford's successes in addressing homelessness

-  **4.1** Ongoing Identify and communicate key successes in Abbotsford's approach to addressing homelessness to stakeholders and senior levels of government.

Advocate to senior levels of government for funding to fill gaps in services

-  **4.2** Ongoing Advocate to senior levels of government for increased investments in the community to address homelessness including complex care housing, population-specific services, and mental health supports for frontline staff.



Goal 5



Goal 5

Develop and Implement New Strategies for Better Tracking, Understanding and Communicating Progress on Homelessness

Best Practice

By-name lists are comprehensive lists of every person in a community experiencing homelessness. With consent, each person has a file including history, health and housing needs that is updated regularly. Having complete data on individuals in the community experiencing homelessness can help coordinate and drive forward housing solutions for individuals and match housing to needs. It also helps to track data on homelessness and test new approaches, prioritize resources, and better understand what efforts are effective.

Measure and communicate progress to help anticipate future need and fill gaps

5.1

Medium-Term

Work with community partners to develop and implement a 'by-name' list as part of a Coordinated Access System to support coordination of resources and understand changes in homelessness in Abbotsford.

5.2

Medium-Term & Ongoing

Use data from the "by-name list" and other key sources to develop a dashboard on homelessness in Abbotsford, communicating key successes and personal stories where possible.

5.3

Short-Term & Ongoing

Use existing mechanisms to better track the availability of resources and services in the community and communicate this information to the public, other service providers, neighbouring municipalities and First Nations.

Engage and update the community of Abbotsford on the Homelessness Action Plan

5.4

Short-Term

Develop a communication strategy for the release of the Homelessness Action Plan, that includes avenues (e.g., social media) for regularly communicating with and receiving information from the public about homelessness in Abbotsford.



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