

# Living Space Relocation Review

## Summary Report on results of Part 1

November 6, 2023

### 1. Introduction

This report was written by Third Party Public Inc., the organization retained by the Cochrane District Social Services Administration Board (CDSSAB) to lead the Living Space Relocation Review. It is the first of three summary reports that will be written by Third Party Public and shared publicly as the Relocation Review unfolds. This report includes:

- a brief background on the events leading up to the Relocation Review;
- explains the process proposed to implement the Relocation Review; and
- summarizes and aggregates the feedback received through over 35 initial conversations held one-on-one and with small groups, during which our team connected with a range of different voices – residents and business owners, Indigenous leaders and service providers, people with lived experience with homelessness, elected officials from the City of Timmins and the Province, municipal staff, CDSSAB staff and Board members, organizations providing services to those experiencing homelessness, and others (a full list is provided on page 7 of this report).

The purpose of these initial discussions was to begin to understand the different perspectives and priorities that exist related to the Relocation Review, and to start identifying factors to consider when determining where to potentially relocate the Living Space emergency shelter. Some suggestions on where to consider relocating Living Space were also offered.

*This Part 1 Summary Report does not, and is not intended to, present a complete picture of everything that will be considered during the five-month Relocation Review, which began in late September 2023 and will be complete by the end of February 2024. It is a starting place on which broader discussions involving many more voices will take place during Parts 2 and 3 of the Relocation Review.*

### Background to the Relocation Review

A request to complete the Relocation Review was initiated by Timmins City Council following the June 22, 2023 Town Hall on Community Safety. Over 1,000 people attended in-person at the McIntyre Arena with another 2,600 watching the Town Hall live via YouTube (recording [here](#)). All but one speaker focused on the dramatic increase in crime they see, the crimes going unaddressed (break-ins, theft, destruction of property, etc.), aggressive panhandling, open drug use, and street life that is leaving them in significant distress and fearful. Many said they wanted Living Space to be moved.

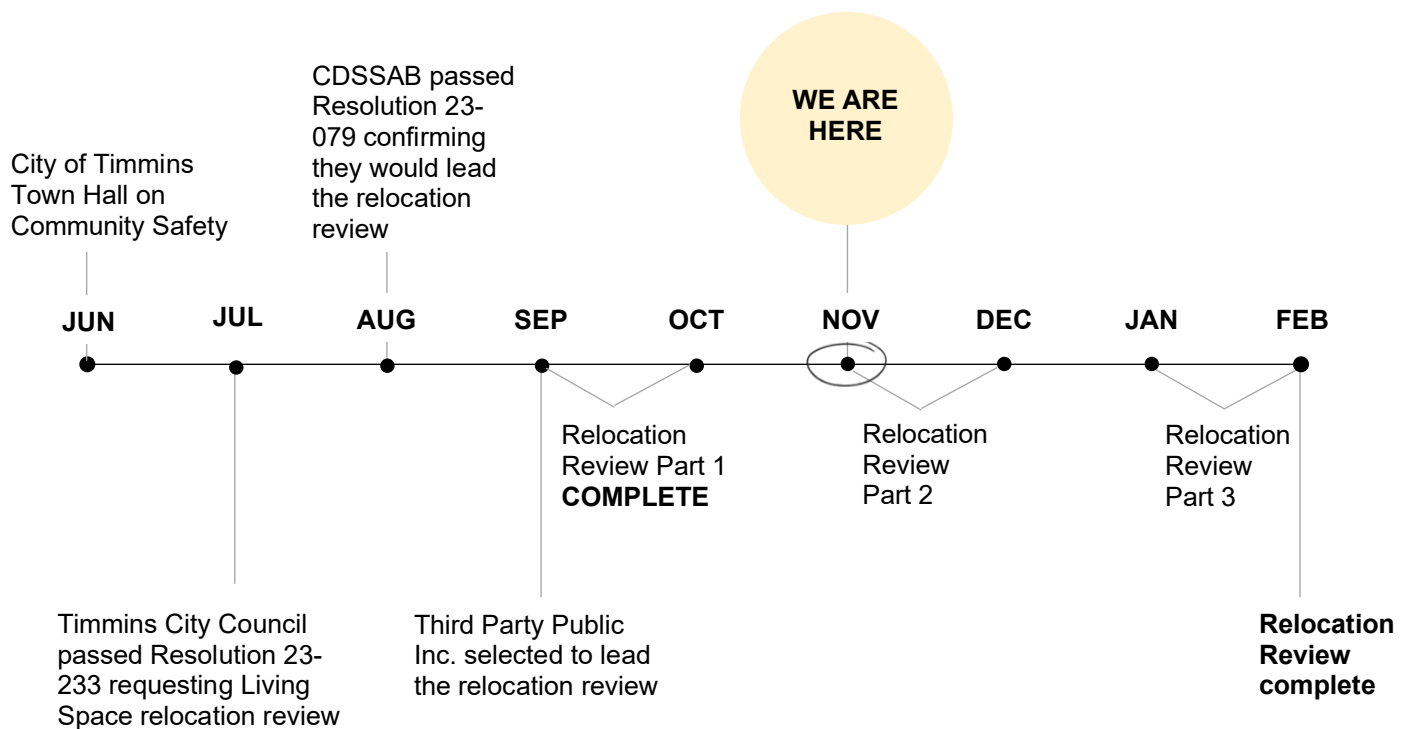
In response to the Town Hall on Community Safety, the City of Timmins Council passed Resolution 23-233 in July 2023 (link to Resolution [here](#)) which requested that “all organizations and boards involved with the operations or funding of Living Space consider options for relocation out of residential and commercial zones”. The Resolution does not ask for a specific location for Living Space to be identified

or recommended. The Resolution also notes that mental health, addictions treatment, and housing are core provincial responsibilities and urgently requests that the upper levels of government work together to secure funding to establish a new full service facility in Timmins that is inclusive of 24/7 services including housing/shelter, food, mental health and addictions treatment/counselling, and job and education training.

The CDSSAB is the main funder of Living Space. In August 2023, the CDSSAB accepted the City’s request (see Board Resolution 23-079 [here](#)), noting that the Relocation Review would be conducted in six months (by the end of February 2024) and completed by a third party. The CDSSAB Board petitioned the following community partners to collaborate in the Relocation Review, including the Timmins Police Services, City of Timmins, Mushkegowuk Council, Canadian Mental Health Association, Timmins and District Hospital, The Reaching Home Community Advisory Board<sup>1</sup>, Wabun Tribal Council, and the Porcupine Health Unit. A competitive process for securing the services of a third party to conduct the Relocation Review was initiated.

In September 2023, [Third Party Public Inc.](#) was retained by the CDSSAB to lead the Relocation Review. The organization was established in 2004 and works exclusively for governments and public agencies with a mandate to serve the public. We specialize in the delivery of collaborative processes that bring many different interests and perspectives together to inform public sector decisions. It is not our role to have an opinion on if or where the Living Space emergency shelter should be located – it is our responsibility to steward a process where people, organizations, and governments in Timmins and in the District of Cochrane have room to discuss and make progress on this together. Indigenous engagement is a key part of the Relocation Review, and Eagle Cree Consulting is leading this work, in close collaboration with Third Party Public.

### Relocation Review Timeline (2023-2024)



<sup>1</sup> [Reaching Home](#) is a federally funded, community-based program aimed at preventing and reducing homelessness.

## 2. Approach to the Relocation Review

Third Party Public's approach to the Relocation Review is to:

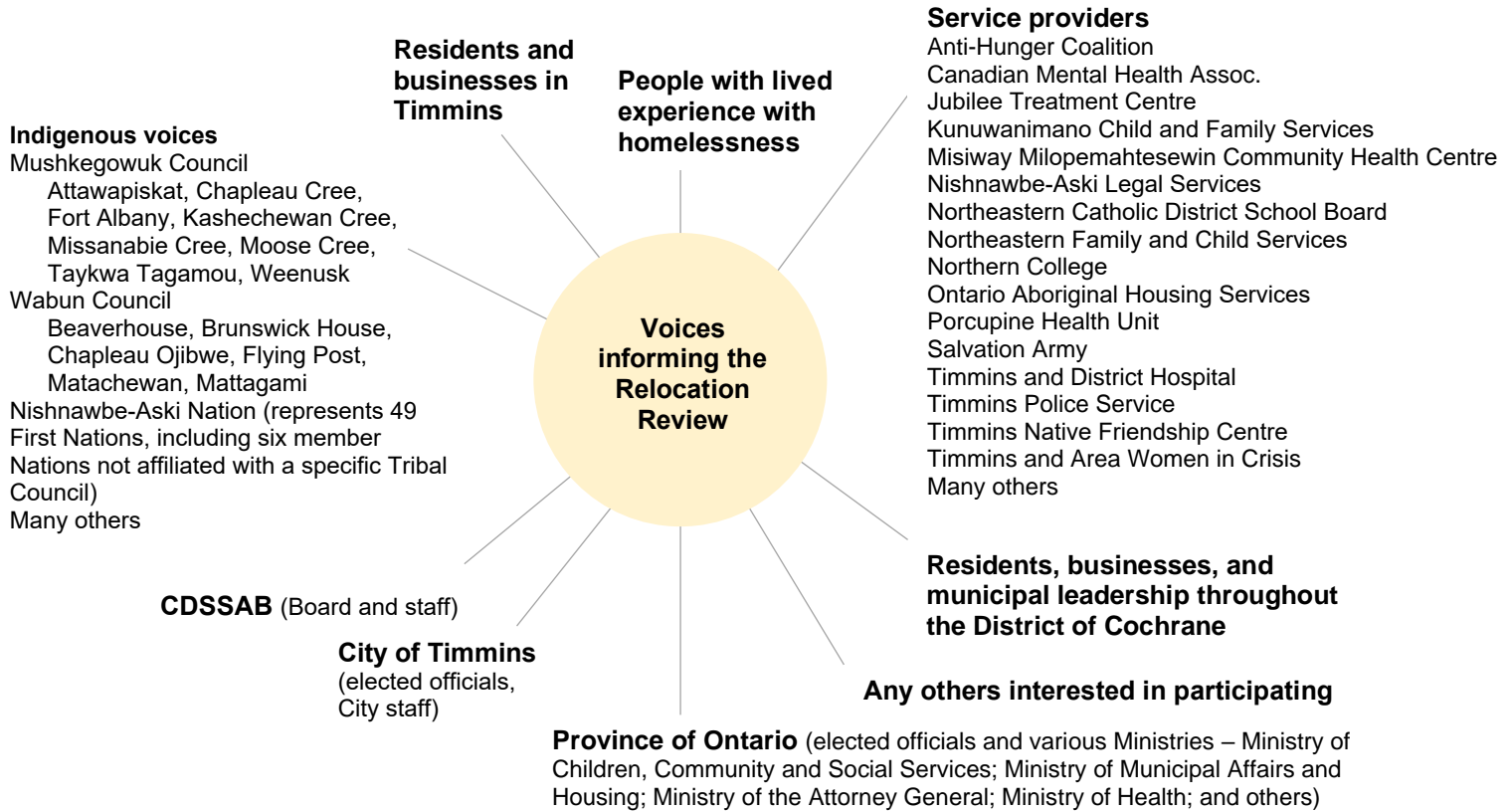
- deliver a transparent, participatory approach that honours all voices;
- provide leadership in the process, as third-party process stewards that are not advocating for any particular outcome of the Relocation Review, but who instead make space and bring structure for participants to drive the outcomes of the Review;
- create space for the full range of opinions and perspectives to be considered;
- identify where there is common ground to be found, if any, between different participants and interests, as well as places where differences exist and the reasons behind them;
- acknowledge tensions and provide constructive approaches to respecting differences; and
- deliver a defensible Relocation Review process and outcome that serves as a strong foundation on which future discussions can build.

The process for completing the Relocation Review is divided into three-parts. The work completed in each part will form the foundation of the discussions that follow in subsequent parts. This is intentional, so that when the Relocation Review is complete, the outcomes will be self-evident to anyone participating in the process and/or following information, updates, and reports shared via the Relocation Review website. Here is a description of the three parts:

- **Part 1. Make sense of where things are at now (Sep/Oct) – COMPLETE.** Part 1 included review of relevant background materials as well as one-on-one and small group discussion with different voices. A basic review website was created, including an opportunity for people to sign up to receive e-updates (as of October 31, there were 87 people signed up). This Part 1 Summary Report summarizes some of our key learnings to date and is being shared publicly. It is the foundation from which we will approach Part 2.
- **Part 2. Explore options for relocation of Living Space (Nov/Dec).** Part 2 will focus on identifying factors that need to be considered when assessing relocation options for Living Space and the potential benefits and challenges of different options. Suggestions and ideas on how to address challenges will be encouraged. Participants will also be asked to identify any additional information or data that would be helpful to informing the Relocation Review.
- **Part 3. Share and refine draft outcomes of the Relocation Review (Jan/Feb 2024).** Part 3 will focus on reviewing the draft outcomes of the Relocation Review and collaboratively refining them. The final report from the Relocation Review will be completed by the end of February 2024 and posted on the Relocation Review website and distributed to anybody who has participated in the process and/or signed up to receive e-updates.

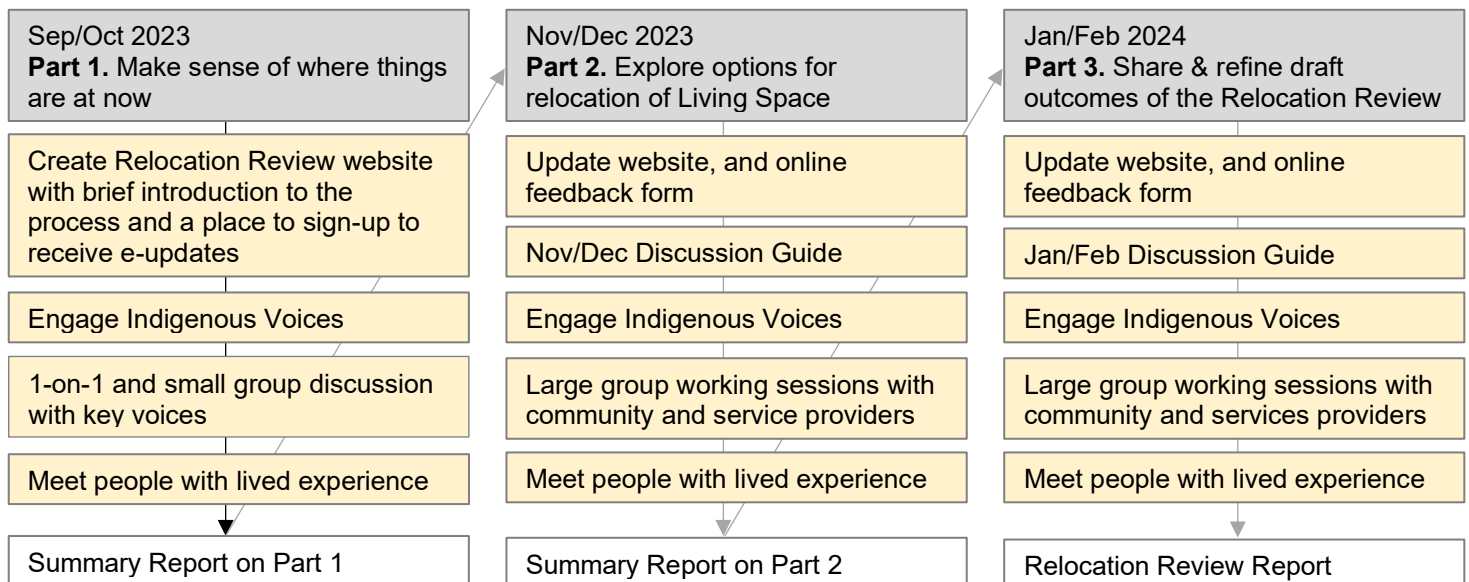
# Extensive community engagement throughout

There are many different individuals, businesses, organizations, institutions, and other interests that are connected to and/or impacted by the location of the Living Space emergency shelter. The Relocation Review welcomes any and all voices interested in participating in the process. These include (but are not limited to) those captured in the graphic below.



## Overview of the process

Core activities being implemented through the Relocation Review are described below.



### 3. What happened in Part 1

Part 1 began in late September and continued through till October 31, 2023. In addition to watching the [recording](#) of the June Community Safety Town Hall, other background information was also reviewed. The main activity during Part 1 involved holding one-on-one and small group meetings. A basic [Relocation Review website](#) was also created, including an opportunity to sign up to receive updates. Over 35 meetings (one-on-one and sometimes in small groups) were held with over 75 people. Our Third Party Public team introduced ourselves and our proposed approach to completing the Relocation Review. We asked everyone we met with to help us understand their expectations and perspectives on what needs to be considered during the Relocation Review, and any thoughts they had about the process. The majority of these were held in-person in Timmins, in addition to discussions held on Zoom or by phone. The table that follows identifies Part 1 participants.

#### Participants in Part 1 of the Relocation Review

Organization/Interest	People connected with to date (with many more to come in)
Residents and businesses	17 people, including people owning businesses downtown, residents living in the neighbourhood next to Living Space and downtown, and people currently or previously connected with Voices of Timmins and/or Move Living Space.
Indigenous voices	4 individuals, including elders and other individuals who have direct experience with family and friends experiencing homelessness, including those who have lost loved ones on the streets of Timmins
People with lived experience	3 individuals who have used the services of Living Space
First Nations	12 people, including representatives from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Mushkegowuk Council (Grand Chief, Deputy Grand Chiefs, and staff)</li> <li>• Nishnawbe Aski Nation (Deputy Grand Chief and staff)</li> <li>• Wabun Council staff</li> </ul>
Service providers and coordinators, including Indigenous service providers	14 people, including representatives from: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anti-Hunger Coalition Timmins</li> <li>• Canadian Mental Health Association Cochrane-Timiskaming</li> <li>• Kunuwanimano Child and Family Services</li> <li>• Living Space</li> <li>• Monteith Correctional Facility</li> <li>• Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services</li> <li>• Porcupine Health Unit</li> <li>• Salvation Army</li> <li>• Timmins and Area District Hospital</li> <li>• Timmins and Area Women in Crisis</li> <li>• Timmins Police Service</li> </ul>
City of Timmins	11 people, including Mayor Boileau and Councillors Black, Curley, Gvozdanovic, Marks, Murray, Robin, and Whissell (conversation with Councillor Feldman to be rescheduled) and the CAO, Community Programs Manager, and Manager of Planning.
Cochrane DSSAB	12 people, including the CAO and staff responsible for housing, paramedics, community services and Housing Now, the System of Care, the By Name List, and communications.
Town of Iroquois Falls	3 people, including Mayor Delaurier, the Director Recreational Services, and the Deputy Clerk
Province of Ontario	Minister of Mines, Hon. George Pirie

## 4. What people told us

People were generous in sharing their perspectives with our team. Feedback is organized here into three sections, including: topics where the same message was consistently shared, almost universally, by those we spoke to; information to consider/learn more about during the Relocation Review; and different ideas on potential locations for Living Space.

### **Topics where the same message was consistently shared, almost universally, by those we spoke to.**

1. There was a keen and repeated interest in ensuring that the Relocation Review is public.
2. The importance of treating all with dignity and respect was repeatedly raised.
3. There is no movement forward without meaningful collaboration with Indigenous communities.
4. People living in the residential area in which Living Space is located are experiencing significant negative impacts since the opening of the emergency shelter.
5. Downtown Timmins is struggling.
6. There are people experiencing homelessness in Timmins that have multiple, complex needs that require specialized training, housing, skills, services, and supports.
7. The Living Space facility is not providing the intensive 24/7 supports that many of the highest needs people require.
8. Timmins Police Service is understaffed and recruiting is a challenge. There are concerns that criminal activity is going unaddressed.
9. The provincial and federal governments need to direct more resources and more expertise to Timmins and the District of Cochrane because we do not have enough to respond to community needs.
10. Many people said that they have first-hand experience with friends and family members with mental health or addictions issues.

### **Preliminary list of information people said is important to consider during the Relocation Review.**

1. Residents and businesses are frustrated and want to see the concerns that they're raising addressed. The current situation is very upsetting and many are interested in being part of the solution. There are people organizing and doing their own research to try and better understand issues and how other cities facing similar issues are responding.
2. Strengthening relationships with Indigenous communities involves understanding and acting in a way that respects Indigenous ceremony, protocol, and culture. Indigenous people are diverse, and different identities are important to acknowledge. Collaboration is essential. There are significant difficulties that Indigenous communities face, and good news stories are also important to tell. It is important that every individual be allowed to speak for themselves. Fostering inclusivity and ensuring that voices are heard is important through the relocation review process.

3. The history and role of Timmins in the District of Cochrane is important to understand. Timmins is a mining town and is the hub of the District of Cochrane – it's where people go for services, school, work, to have a night out at a restaurant and the movies. It's where a lot of the economy is. The city has changed a lot since it was founded in 1911, as has the downtown. The population of Timmins is aging. What happens in the District of Cochrane, impacts Timmins and vice versa – so engaging voices from across the District of Cochrane is an important part of the Relocation Review.
4. Opioid addictions, mental health issues, and the affordable housing crisis are major contributors to the challenges Timmins is facing. There is also a shortage of family doctors. Over time, provincial policies and funding have also changed significantly, which influences how things unfold in Timmins and in the District of Cochrane.
5. Homelessness used to be more hidden in Timmins, until about 6-7 years ago when there was a significant increase in people sleeping in alcoves in the downtown and the Business Improvement Area and Chamber of Commerce raised concerns. In 2017, service providers got together (the CDSSAB, CMHA, Timmins District Hospital, the Porcupine Health Unit, Timmins Native Friendship Centre, Misiway Milopemahtesewin, Cochrane District Social Planning Council, and the Timmins Economic Development Corporation) to respond, and the CDSSAB bought the first emergency shelter location on Cedar Street, with partners working together to provide services. The demand for the shelter increased and Living Space moved to the larger location on Spruce Street.
6. There are significant efforts being made to provide housing, mental health and addictions supports, and to address community safety and well-being in Timmins. Examples include (but are not limited to):
  - The City of Timmins has made new investments since the June 2023 Community Safety Town Hall to respond to concerns, including additional support provided to the Mushkegowuk Fire Keeper Patrol to provide an enhanced level of community outreach for people who are experiencing homelessness and sleeping outdoors (supporting services from 4pm to midnight), and expanded access to the City's Safety Improvement Grant program.
  - There are existing supportive housing and transitional housing units in Timmins being provided at three locations, and more investments are coming. The [updated plan and investment strategy for homelessness prevention in the Cochrane DSSAB](#) was completed last month (September 2023) that allocates over \$6 million annually to: create 10 more units of Supportive Housing, with 24/7 supports; to enhance Living Space or to rent/purchase and renovate an alternate location to serve as a Service Hub; to integrate paramedicine programs with other service providers; and to create at least 6 units of Transitional Housing; and to support more Indigenous-led non-profit organizations to provide support and reunification services.
  - The City, DSSAB, and service providers also coordinate their efforts through the [Community Safety and Well-being Plan](#) which was adopted by Timmins City Council in April 2021 (with over 40 organizations representing emergency services, government, social service providers, and school boards helping develop the plan that provides a framework to achieve Timmins' basic needs of health care, education, housing, social and cultural diversity, and nourishment).
  - The Anti-Hunger Coalition Timmins coordinates efforts of multiple agencies providing food to those experiencing homelessness (calendar of services is [here](#)), as well as to a number of seniors.

7. Bricks and mortar are part of the story, but services are the bigger part. There is a strong focus on providing housing first, and at the same time there were others who said, “It is inhumane to rush to put people into housing without the proper supports – without supports, they fail.” We need the capacity to offer people longer term stays with appropriate supports.
8. The responsibilities of different organizations and institutions needs to be clearer, including the CDSSAB, the City of Timmins, the Timmins Police Service, the Province of Ontario, and service providers. How different rules, regulations, and laws are enforced, and the consequences associated with breaking them, also needs to be clearer (e.g., bylaw enforcement, law enforcement, landlord-tenant relationships, etc.).
9. The relationship between the services provided at the safe injection facility and Living Space needs to be considered. These are both locations providing services that many people experiencing homelessness depend on, which reduces pressure on emergency services, the hospital, and other first responders.
10. Communication with neighbours needs to be a critical part of the process when emergency shelter services are introduced in a community. There needs to be a conversation about how the shelter can be a good neighbour in the communities in which it is located, and how the people living and working in those neighbourhoods can be a good neighbour to the shelter.

## **There are different perspectives on locations to consider for Living Space.**

Some people believe strongly that the emergency shelter needs to be centrally located so people using the shelter can be close to friends and family, access services, access the food bank and meal programs, access second hand stores, be available to view housing options when they become available, access washroom and laundry facilities, etc. In-town suggestions for potential locations to consider included:

- the old Canada Tire/former Value Village site;
- the Ramada Inn on Highway 101 (where evacuations are supported); and
- the Old Timmins Daily Press building; and
- the current location on Spruce Street South.

Others said they feel strongly that the emergency shelter should move out of town. Many envision this as a 24/7 facility that could be divided into sections with low barrier, high barrier, and transitional housing and provide a full range of wrap around services, food, and primary health care. Out of town locations suggested include:

- Highway 101 West at the former Tembec building (where the The Wakenagun Youth Healing Lodge is located); and
- Highway 655 north, across from Gillies Lake.

Others proposed the possibility of multiple locations, with a high barrier shelter potentially located in town (like the Good Samaritan in South Porcupine), and a housing development out of town where treatment would be provided, food, and wrap around services.



## Process suggestions shared for the Relocation Review.

Comments shared by participants to date:

1. Fostering inclusivity and ensuring that voices are heard is important through the relocation review process.
2. It is important that a wide range of voices participate in the Relocation Review, and not only those that are advocating to move Living Space. People in other Wards and across the District could be impacted by a relocation decision, and they need to be part of this.
3. Include youth in the Relocation Review, including students from the college, Timmins Youth Connect, and young professionals. Also include Employment Service providers in the Relocation Review.
4. Some concerned residents are doing research and watching documentaries to learn what other cities facing similar issues have done.
5. There will never be one answer that solves everything – there's no one panacea. We need to make decisions based on what we think will work and try our best to make it work. There is no right and wrong way.

## 5. Next Steps

The Part 1 results will be shared with all who participated during Part 1, posted to the Relocation Review [website](#), and used to prepare for discussions during Part 2 of the Relocation Review, which will unfold in November and December 2023.

Part 2 will focus on three things:

1. Distributing the results of Part 1 and seeking feedback from a wider range of voices about anything major missing or off-base that is important to informing the Relocation Review;
2. Understanding what an emergency shelter that's working well looks like from different perspectives, and what needs to happen to make it successful; and
3. Identifying potential advantages and challenges associated with the emergency shelter being located in-town or out-of-town.

Part 2 engagement activities will include Indigenous engagement, community working sessions, a focus group with people with lived experience, and a working session with service providers. Materials will also be available online, along with an online feedback form. Details of meeting dates, times, and locations are available online on the Relocation Review website at [www.livingspacereview.ca](http://www.livingspacereview.ca).