

# Results from Part 2 Online Feedback Form

January 9, 2024

## Overview

Part 2 of the Living Space Relocation Review focused on sharing the feedback received during Part 1 and seeking feedback on factors to consider when contemplating the relocation of the Living Space emergency shelter. Several in-person meetings were held, including two community working sessions, a working session with service providers, a meeting with Indigenous voices, a “pop-up” at the Youth Wellness Hub and a focus group with clients at Living Space (see feedback summaries online at [www.livingspacereview.ca](http://www.livingspacereview.ca)).

In addition, an online, confidential, feedback form was created to give an opportunity to people who were unable to attend working sessions to share their thoughts and/or those who have additional perspectives to share either before or after the working sessions. The online feedback form was “live” on the [www.livingspacereview.ca](http://www.livingspacereview.ca) website on Friday, November 17 and the results summarized in this report are from feedback received as of Sunday, December 31, 2023 (just over 6 weeks).

The online feedback form asked the same three questions asked during the in-person working sessions, including:

1. Timmins will have an emergency shelter. What does an emergency shelter that’s working well look like to you? What’s happening to make it successful?
2. a) What do you see as the top 3 advantages and disadvantages of an in-town location?  
b) What do you see as the top 3 advantages and disadvantages of an out-of-town location?
3. Do you have any other comments or advice to share with the Relocation Review team?

Basic demographic questions were also asked.

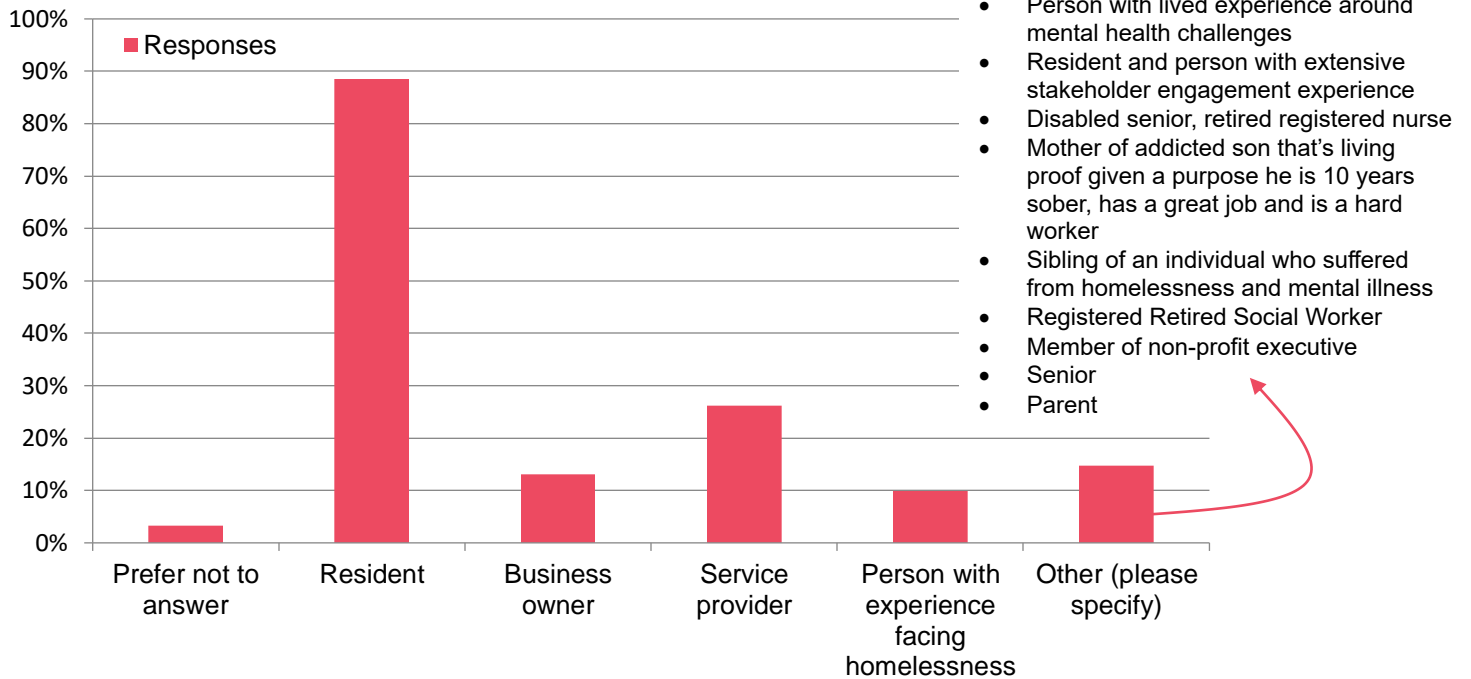
The online feedback form was created by Third Party Public Inc., the organization leading the Living Space Relocation Review, in collaboration with Eagle Cree Consulting. This summary was written by the Third Party Public team of Nicole Swerhun and Matthew Wheatley. As facilitators that are not advocating for any particular outcome of the Relocation Review, the intent is to capture the perspectives shared through the completed feedback forms, not to assess the merit or accuracy of any of these perspectives. This summary does not indicate an endorsement of any of these perspectives on the part of Third Party Public or Eagle Cree Consulting.

Note that points are numbered in this summary for ease of reference only and are not intended to imply that some points are more important than others. If you have any questions about this summary, please contact Third Party Public at [nicole@thirdpartypublic.ca](mailto:nicole@thirdpartypublic.ca) or [matthew@thirdpartypublic.ca](mailto:matthew@thirdpartypublic.ca).

## Who completed the online feedback form?

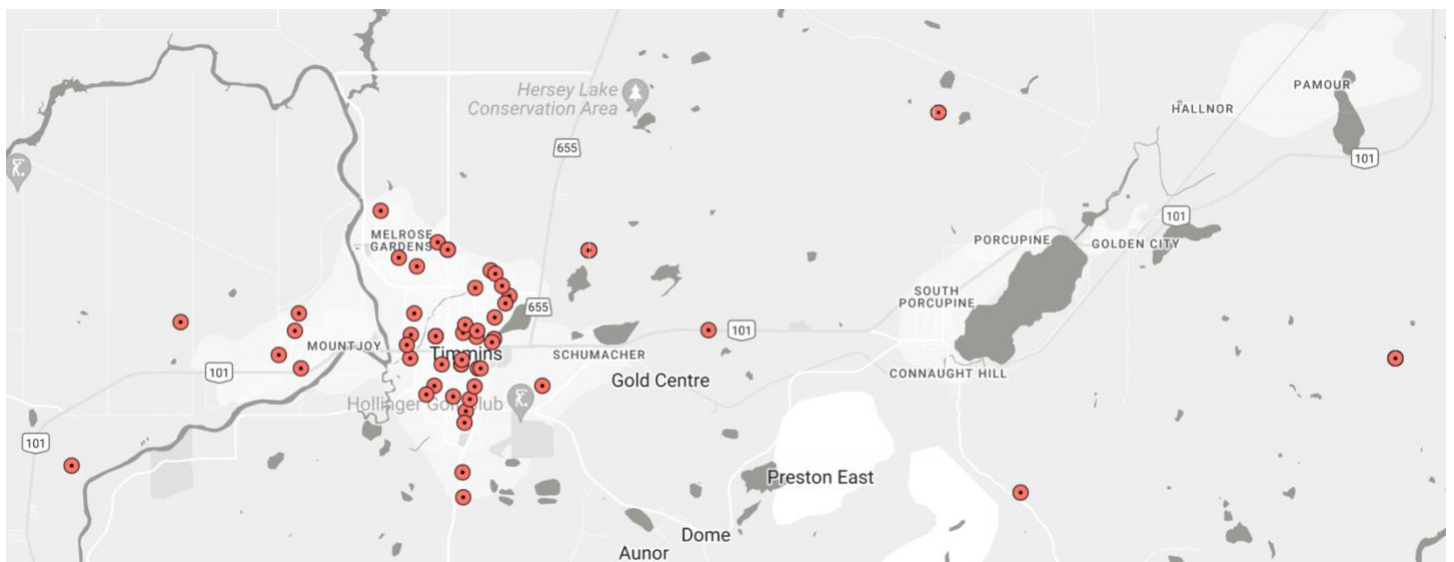
There were 62 people who completed the online feedback form between November 17 and December 31, 2023. Respondents were asked how they would identify themselves, selecting all responses that are applicable to them. One person skipped answering this question, and the remaining 61 people responded as summarized in the chart below.

### How would you identify yourself? Select all that apply.



## Mapping of postal codes provided by people who completed the Part 2 Feedback Form

The feedback form asked people to provide their postal codes. 58 people provided their postal codes, which are mapped below. Dots overlap where the same postal code was provided by more than one respondent.



Map created using <https://batchgeo.com>

## What does an emergency shelter that's working well look like to you?

Number of responses to this question: 56 (6 people skipped this question)

The most frequent responses to this question focused on two things:

1. **Success = Access to services.** These responses focused on the need for supports to help people get back on their feet. It was suggested that when people get the help they need to get back on track, there will also be fewer issues around the property and the neighbourhood. Suggested services included things like mental health assistance, drug rehab assistance and addictions services, medical help, employment training, help with cleaning, cooking and laundry, other life skills, health education, crisis workers, outreach from Indigenous communities, and other supports to help people get back on their feet. Some referred to the need for 24/7 “wraparound” services provided in one location so that clients of the services don't have to “run all over town” to access services and that important because it's unreasonable to expect individuals to know what services are available to them and how they can help.

*There were also different perspectives shared related to access to services, including:*

- ⇒ People who said that they do not think a successful emergency shelter provides services to people with addictions issues. Many of these responses said a successful emergency shelter provides a temporary and short-term place to live on a path to finding a permanent place to live and sources of better income. There was concern that providing services attracts people who need a treatment centre and not a homeless shelter. There are concerns that people with addictions issues are committing crimes and taking advantage of the help the emergency shelter offers. It was suggested that a small fraction of the population is abusing the shelter system and exhausting community social resources, making it harder for the truly homeless to get a fair shake.
  - ⇒ Responses that describe a shelter that doesn't duplicate the work that's already being done by existing service providers but instead refers people to partners, services, and programs – a physical hub from which staff from other organizations can work (and a shelter organization that doesn't become top-heavy with multiple coordinators and administrators).
  - ⇒ A response that focused on the importance of continuing wraparound services after a person or family are able to be housed so they don't lose their supports and revert back to homelessness.
2. **Success = No drugs, no alcohol, and strict rules.** Many of these responses focused on the need for strict rules and policies against drugs, with some saying that anyone who has drugs or is known to be involved with drugs should not be allowed in. It should also not be a place to access drugs. Many also said a successful shelter does not tolerate illegal activity or weapons or violence. On-site security was also mentioned, along with the need for consequences (e.g., bans) if rules are broken. A few responses focused on an emergency shelter that's “high barrier” noting that this will be safer because it will hold people to a higher standard – individuals would be met where they are at daily and most of the concerns arising from patrons would be assessed properly and continuously.

*There was also a different perspective shared related to access to how to manage shelter clients with different needs, including:*

- ⇒ A response that suggested high and low barrier sections in the shelter be separated to separate the true homeless people from the opioid users that choose to be homeless.

Other themes in the responses included:

3. **Success = Clients and neighbours feel and are safe and respected.** Accessible, welcoming, and safe. A place where people can live in peace and harmony. Anyone and everyone living in the shelter needs to take part in cleaning and maintaining a safe living environment.
4. **Success = No people screaming and in distress outside the building during the day and night.** The police, fire, and ambulance services are not at the shelter multiple times per day. There aren't addicts hanging out in front of the shelter or people shooting up directly across the street. There are fewer people on the streets and fewer "zombies" because people are getting the help they need to get off drugs. Success is not having people wandering around town and breaking into private properties. Success also is no public intoxication with drugs or alcohol and no needles from one end of the city to the other. There is an older man in need of mental health help as he is chasing cars and hitting and threatening drivers – which is dangerous for the man and the drivers.
5. **Success = A location away from the core, residential areas, school areas, and downtown.**

*There were also different perspectives shared related to location, including:*

- ⇒ Responses that identified the need for the shelter to be close enough for clients of the shelter to access services. It was suggested that the former location beside City Hall was successful.
  - ⇒ A response that suggested that the current location is not feasible because too much damage and community uproar has occurred in the last 3 years.
  - ⇒ A response that said this can only work if financial supports are in place to link existing community resources to the relocated shelter.
6. **Success = A place that's open during the day with the doors unlocked rather than having people loitering on the streets.**
  7. **Success = Community partners are working together to help support clients of the shelter.** They fully support the shelter and consider homelessness their responsibility rather than accepting less substandard care for their clients.
  8. **Success = Qualified and trained staff that receiving ongoing employee training and development.** Some responses focused on the need for staff to be able to handle difficulties associated with running a shelter. Ideally, it would have minimal turnover among staff and volunteers. Success was also described as having staff with lived experience (ideally), who are well-paid and never work alone.

Other responses described success as including:

- Space for storage of carts.
- An integrated inner city health care clinic with primary care, addiction care, and allied health.
- A Community Relations/Stakeholder Engagement Strategy, including the establishment of a Community Committee comprised of shelter clients (current or former), community members, police, and elected officials. Note that another response expressed concern about any involvement of City officials in the shelter.
- An improvement in accountability at the top of Living Space to ensure clear safeguards are in place, standards are met, and lessons are learned from the past occurrences of administrative corruption.
- No shelter in Timmins.
- Making Living Space a high barrier homeless shelter that doesn't serve anybody that comes from areas outside of our catchment area because our tax base should not be used to solve their issues.

What do you see as the advantages and disadvantages of in-town and out-of-town potential locations for the emergency shelter?

Number of responses to in-town advantages and disadvantages: 60 (2 people skipped this question)

Number of responses to out-of-town advantages and disadvantages: 59 (3 people skipped this question)

	In-town	Out-of-town
<b>Advantages</b>	<p><u>The most frequent responses to this question focused on two things:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Advantage = More accessible and closer to services.</b></li> <li><b>Advantage = None.</b></li> </ol> <p><b>Other advantages identified =</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• People accessing the shelter like having it downtown</li> <li>• Closer to family and friends</li> <li>• Less panhandling</li> <li>• Close for staff and agencies</li> <li>• Feeling of belonging</li> <li>• More financially viable</li> <li>• Fast response from emergency services and close to medical attention if needed</li> <li>• No transportation required, access to transit/bus</li> </ul> <p>There was one response that said this wasn't a fair question since asking about advantages will bias the feedback report.</p>	<p><u>The most frequent responses to this question focused on three things:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Advantage = Potential for less crime, less access to stealing, people will feel safer, fewer neighbours impacted.</b></li> <li><b>Advantage = Harder to access drugs and harder to get into trouble.</b></li> <li><b>Advantage = People living in the area will have their sense of security and confidence back.</b></li> </ol> <p><b>Other advantages identified =</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• More space for gardening</li> <li>• Reduced feces and urine downtown</li> <li>• People experiencing homelessness will not be seen in the downtown core</li> <li>• Less judgemental residents around</li> <li>• Less panhandling</li> <li>• Less incentive to come to Timmins because there's a place to "stay"</li> <li>• Support in one location (bring services)</li> </ul>
<b>Disadvantages</b>	<p><u>The most frequent responses to this question focused on two things:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Disadvantage = More crime, theft, attraction of drug dealers, disruptive behaviour in residential areas and downtown, and people feeling unsafe.</b></li> <li><b>Disadvantage = More needles, more garbage, lower property values.</b></li> </ol> <p><b>Other disadvantages identified =</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Anxiety for residents, people see folks experiencing homelessness in the area of the emergency shelter</li> <li>• Not close to rehab</li> <li>• Easier access to substances</li> <li>• Stigma and negativity from the public (e.g., posting photos on media)</li> <li>• Normalizes crime and drug use.</li> </ul>	<p><u>The most frequent responses to this question focused on two things:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>Disadvantage = Lack of accessibility.</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Several focused on the importance of providing transportation.</li> <li>• Some said that this would lead to more people on the street/sleeping rough in town or opting out of accessing the shelter due to far location.</li> </ul> </li> <li><b>Disadvantage = None.</b></li> </ol> <p><b>Other disadvantages identified =</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Cost</li> <li>• Further for police/ambulance</li> <li>• Possibly harder to recruit workers</li> <li>• Feeling of exclusion from society</li> <li>• Segregating people who are already marginalized instead of creating ways for them to participate positively</li> </ul>

## Do you have any other comments or advice to share with the Relocation Review team?

Number of responses: 54 (8 people skipped this question)

The summary of the comments is organized largely into two sections, starting first with themes and comments that focused on the challenges being experienced today, followed by themes and comments that focused more on what people think needs to happen in the future. Individual comments related to each theme are provided – in the words of the survey respondents – below each theme.

Comments that focused on the challenges being experienced today included:

### 1. **Some people have lived here a long time and say that it has never been like this.**

- We are losing too many good, hard working, taxpaying residents because Timmins is no longer safe. People don't want to raise their children here. Our friends are leaving.
- Living Space and the safe injection site have ruined Timmins / have invited difficulties to Timmins.
- Timmins used to be such a nice place to live. I've lived here for 40 years and it's never been like this. We have had some "homeless" here before but they were all known. People used to say hello to them and they never bothered anyone or caused any kind of trouble. They would bike around picking up cans and bottles so even back then the "homeless" were taking care of this city not treating it like a trash can or a toilet. I want my city back.
- I have lived in Timmins for over 60 years and have seen a lot. I have also been homeless myself. This is the worst I have ever seen. It's not safe for seniors and after dark is even worse. We need a complete service facility with rehab available. Housing is a problem in Timmins as rent is too expensive. Need more money to build low income housing. Need a long term fix. Current location is not the place to have it.

### 2. **Some people are afraid and want to see change.**

- I am afraid to go to certain areas of town at night because of drug addicts (e.g., Dollar Store on Park Road, Food Basics, Metro). They have harassed me for money. I will not walk home from the movies to the north end of town because I am afraid of these people.
- Scared to go to bank alone, can't bring children to the library or stores in this area. Constantly harassed for money or cigarettes, when say no, some individuals have become threatening. Smells strongly of urine and feces, always someone passed out in the vicinity.
- It has been my experience that individuals will often not use services that are provided in our community. The residents of Timmins are extremely frustrated, emotionally drained, frightened for their safety, and exhausted of always being approached to come up with solutions that these individuals will not accept!
- Children seeing things they shouldn't see, time for a big change.
- Get it done before people take matters into their own hand.

*There were also fears shared from the perspectives of people experiencing homelessness, including:*

- ⇒ People who are homeless do not feel safe staying at Living Space because it has been taken over by drugs and chaos.
- ⇒ Some homeless do not use the shelter because they don't feel it's safe.

### 3. **Timmins is not unique.**

- We are in an opioid and housing crisis just as the rest of North America, but because we are a smaller community, we see the impacts of both of those much more than in places such as Toronto.

**4. Concerns about services attracting people experiencing homelessness.**

- Living Space is attracting and proliferating homelessness in our community.
- Stop taking people from all over. When you talk to homeless, they say they're not from Timmins.
- There's a belief that the CDSSAB has an agreement with communities outside the Cochrane District to accept their addicts and homeless people. It would be helpful for the Relocation Review to confirm whether this true. Also is it true that when addicts from another community, such as Sudbury, are on the waitlist to get into the Timmins Jubilee Rehab Centre, are they sent to Timmins and Living Space in the interim? Please investigate this.
- Large influx of homeless being sent north from southern communities. We do not have the resources available to assist those from other areas. We barely have enough to help those from the area.

Advice that focused on the future included:

**1. People see the problem and want to help, but not at the expense of the negative experiences they have that they link to Living Space.**

- I want people to get help but not at the sacrifice of our neighbourhood's peace of mind and safety. All hours of the night there's screaming, shouting, fighting. Fear leaving the house, use of yard. We were not consulted before any of this took place.
- I think most residents agree that everyone deserves lodging, but since the opening of Living Space there is an undeniable increase in crime that doesn't seem to be addressed. People want to help but we shouldn't have to sacrifice our feelings of safety to do that. I don't shop downtown anymore because I don't feel safe.
- I feel for people who are homeless. But I also feel for the people who worked their entire lives and are now unable to get a full night sleep, have people knocking on their doors and using their yards as a bathroom or stealing everything they can. I've experienced homelessness. There was no shelter in Timmins at the time. But if I were to fall homeless again, I would never set foot in Living Space. I would sleep outside first. The stories from people staying there are so disturbing. No one should be getting robbed or assaulted in a shelter.

**2. The shelter needs to be well run, with good governance, transparency, and strong staff.**

- Ensure governance is solid, well supported, and reviewed often.
- The services that are there daily (ambulance, police) indicate to me that the place needs an overhaul in the way it is run.
- We do not have proper support at the shelter. Professionals are needed to run a successful shelter.
- I totally support the need for a homeless shelter in-town and at the same time understand the concerns about increased theft, damage, etc. I wonder if Living Space was managed by another agency, like CMHA, if there would be more resources to support and allow for a manager to truly focus on operational issues versus administration like a Board, finance, etc.
- Employees of Living Space have talked about the lack of money yet \$6 million in funding has been provided. Please follow the money.
- A homeless shelter is definitely needed and should be named "homeless shelter". It needs to be run with strict conditions and with the promise of zero harm to all occupants. It should be a home run like a dry camp. It shouldn't be run strictly by City Council but needs to be 50/50 meaning the other 50% would be average citizens. All books need to be available and records need to be open and transparent.

**3. Different perspectives on the future location of the shelter.**

- Under no circumstances should it ever be near a residential area.
- Get it out of downtown. Relocate it to the outskirts because it creates an unsafe environment for citizens living in their established neighbourhoods.
- Should be far enough away from residential and business areas. Bored people cause mayhem.



- Move it somewhere an individual can get back on their feet, where rent is not astronomically high, and where they can get proper and qualified assistance (not under-qualified) counselling.
- There's no question that Timmins needs a shelter because it's getting harder and harder to stay afloat in today's economy. There's no question that many people are a few paychecks away from homelessness. But it needs to be safe for everyone, not a shelter for drug users. It needs to be in a safe, clean, secure location with food and warmth available. There needs to be access to health services so it's an ambulance call every time someone needs something and people can get proper care. There need to be mental health service close by. It needs to be away from easy access to drugs and away from citizens who are currently terrorized by the current site. Homeowners have a right to feel safe in their own homes and yards. Their children should be safe walking to school and playing outside. The root cause needs to be addressed and Living Space where it currently is does nothing to help.
- Across from Gillies Lake is not out of town. Tembec is out of town.
- Keeping it in town would need a stricter location and structured approach to encouraging treatment and pathways to repair people's lives.

*There were others who did not think the solution was to relocate, including:*

- ⇒ Solution is not necessarily to relocate but to run the facility properly, provide more treatment and get the opioid users help, not free drug supply.
- ⇒ I don't think moving the shelter to another neighbourhood will change anything, it will only move the problem.
- ⇒ There is no "good" place to relocate a shelter to that will work for everyone. I understand many people's frustrations with the current shelter, but much of their concerns have nothing to do with the shelter itself or the people accessing it. Anything that happens anywhere in town is immediately blamed on Living Space. Moving it out of town would not allow for people to access services, feel a part of a community, take longer for emergency medical attention, and deter people from accessing the shelter meaning there's no point to even have one. I believe it would cause an issue with deaths resulting from hypothermia from those unable to access the shelter along with deaths from overdoses for those able to access the shelter but cannot get immediate medical attention. I truly urge you to recommend not moving the shelter to out of town because it will be a tremendous loss for our community.

#### **4. It's important to provide services to those experiencing homeless.**

- It is of great importance that wherever the shelter is, the patrons have access to services.
- The current shelter and services available are not effective. The number of homeless people in our community has doubled and overdose fatalities are still happening. I know someone who suffered from schizophrenia and addiction. He found himself at Living Space several times and had what little possessions he did have were stolen and he was afraid of being assaulted while staying there. Over the years he was housed and the apartments he lived in were awful. He collapsed on the street and died of a fentanyl overdose. The condition of his apartment and the building he lived in were appalling. There is no way outreach workers visited him there to provide the wrap around services he required. Otherwise, they would have known he wasn't safe living there. We need to do better for our community and those who require help. No one should be left behind. If an emergency shelter's only goal is to simply house people who are not able to make healthy choices for themselves, it is a failure. These individuals will be caught in a vicious cycle of homelessness. This is socially irresponsible and completely unacceptable.
- I believe this push to relocate is grounded in racism and is very naïve. We need education about the issues which lead to homelessness, about the reality of the limitations of services and funding that exist (and the need for mobilization to demand increases!), and an acknowledgement that people aren't entitled to feelings of safety and that property protection should not be a priority of the police (and that criminalization of homelessness only exacerbates the issue).



- I personally struggle to repair my life. I do not drink or do drugs but I suffer from mental illness and have learned that there is not a single company in the city that hires mentally ill people. Other than having a home, I am in the same boat trying to rebuild too.

**5. The need for more rules and a different approach to people with addictions issues.**

- Need an all-in-one high barrier shelter with counselling, clinical wound care, meals hot or cold drinks, 24/7 bathroom, showers, a “shop” for clothing, toiletries, etc. An area if they want to live outdoors (an area for burn barrels, tents, or some form of shelter, porta potties).
- Living Space as it is now needs to be shut down. If it stays open, needs to become a high barrier shelter with zero tolerance on crime, drugs, etc. and focus on getting people a job and housing.
- High barrier or nothing.
- Shelter needs rules.
- Concern no rules at the shelter and residents can do whatever they please.
- The shelter should not be accessed by addicted individuals.
- For some reason Timmins has attracted so many drug addicts and homeless that are falsely told that there is help for them here when we cannot even provide help for our own residents that are struggling.
- There has to be a happy medium for all parties. Do not believe it’s the homeless who cause havoc, it’s the persons that have addictions.
- Detox and rehab services instead of enabling drug addicts.
- Timmins seems to care more about the less fortunate drug addicts in our community than the thousands of hardworking taxpayers.

**6. More/better information is needed.**

- There is too much media that blames Living Space and residents for increased theft, drug-related crime, etc. so how can this be clarified for people. We need to understand why police and ambulance are going there regularly. Media always seem to think overdose or violence.
- Safe injection sites allow addictions to go unpunished and don’t understand why we allow this.

**7. There needs to be consultation with residents and transparency in the process.**

- Whatever decision CDSSAB and the City of Timmins makes, they need to have a robust stakeholder engagement and communication strategy, one that covers not only the Living Space issue in the short-term, but the whole homeless/addictions/crime problem in the long-term. Should the decision be made to leave Living Space in its current location, a major shift to a high barrier shelter should be made, again with stakeholder engagement and transparent, consistent communication.
- Needs to be consultation with town residents, not only dropped into locations that city officials think will be fine.
- Thanks for the opportunity to have a say.

## Next Steps

The Third Party Public team committed to sharing this summary of the feedback received through the Part 2 online feedback form, along with summaries of feedback received through in-person working sessions convened during Part 2 of the Relocation Review process. That way people can review all summaries and see the same inputs as the Relocation Review team.

Part 3 of the Living Space Relocation Review will be taking place in January and February 2024, with updates to be provided shortly through [www.livingspacereview.ca](http://www.livingspacereview.ca) and to anyone who has previously participated in the process and/or has signed up through the website to receive updates from the Relocation Review team.