

On Wednesday, November 22, 2023, the Living Space Relocation Review team from Eagle Cree Consulting and Third Party Public held a meeting dedicated to engaging Indigenous voices to share the results from Part 1 of the Living Space Relocation Review and seek feedback on factors to consider when contemplating the relocation of the Living Space emergency shelter.

18 people participated, some of whom were affiliated with organizations (including Timmins Native Friendship Centre, Mushkegowuk Council, Apitipi Anicinapek Nation, Mushkegowuk Fire Keepers, Ontario Aboriginal Housing Services, Living Space, and Timmins & Area Women in Crisis). Elder Pat Etherington Sr. shared opening and closing prayers, along with Elder Francis Whiskeychan. Thank you to all participants.

The meeting was facilitated by Eagle Cree Consulting, with support from Third Party Public Inc., the organization leading the Living Space Relocation Review. This summary was written by Nicole Swerhun and Ruth Belay, with contributions from Jean Sutherland. As facilitators that are not advocating for any particular outcome of the Relocation Review, the intent is to capture the perspectives shared during the discussion, 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.

A draft of this summary was subject to participant review before being finalized. No suggested edits to the draft were received. If you have any questions about this summary, please contact Eagle Cree Consulting at [admin@eaglecreeconsulting.com](mailto:admin@eaglecreeconsulting.com) or Third Party Public at [nicole@thirdpartypublic.ca](mailto:nicole@thirdpartypublic.ca). For more information about the Relocation Review at [www.livingspacereview.ca](http://www.livingspacereview.ca).

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.

## Engagement with Indigenous Voices

Living Space Relocation Review – Part 2

Wed, Nov 22, 2023

9:30 am – 12:30 pm

## SUMMARY OF FEEDBACK

*There were many points raised during the discussion. This summary has been written so that related points are grouped together, even if they were raised at different points during the discussion.*

*Note that no objections were raised to any of the comments made by participants, however neither was every participant asked if they agreed with every point. As a result, this summary reflects the range of perspectives shared and should not be interpreted as consensus on the part of the participants.*

Feedback shared at the meeting for the Living Space Relocation Review to consider

### Comments related to cultural competency and protocols

- It is important to follow our protocols. It feels like this Relocation Review process is rushed. At least a year is needed.
- There's a lack of awareness and understanding of who First Nations people are and our histories. Comments would be toned down if people had an understanding. Living Space is an emergency shelter and not a lifestyle.
- Mushkegowuk offers cultural competency training. There is a need for this in DSSAB and other organizations in Timmins.
- We need more Seven Generations teaching, information, and partnering. We need to educate people in power and privileges.

### Suggestions for Living Space

- It would be helpful to know how many of the people using Living Space are Indigenous. That would help us understand if it's a service that should be Indigenous-led.

years for some services. Even if we can support each other with self-care, that would be helpful.

### **Comments related to the need for more government resources and support**

- The government is trying to divide us – Indigenous on reserve and those who don't live on reserve. Service providers try, but there are not enough of us.
- Many in our community are struggling with mental health and addictions issues. We can't force people into services and then when we do help, we're met with resistance from the public. It's frustrating. Support from the community is critical when integrating people. The government needs to take mental health seriously. There could be three people doing the work currently handled by one person in our organization. Without multi-level support of government, we're being asked to solve the issue with our hands tied behind our backs. We need more advocacy and we need to hold leadership accountable at all levels.
- There is a lot of stigma. It's easy to say that we want to work together but we need more services and funding. We need to collaborate with agencies and they need to understand Indigenous ways.
- Many government *Acts* don't apply on reserves and this is a problem. First Nations are not considered "people" and we don't "fit" into the system. For example, the *Police Services Act* had to be amended to recognize First Nations people. All Acts and policies need to be changed and revisited or else the end result will be that First Nations people will become refugees or homeless. Canadian leaders need to be careful because people are surprised to hear what's happening with First Nations in Canada. They think this is the land of freedom and they don't see the dark side.

### **Comments related to health care**

- Acknowledge two Timmins doctors that spearheaded the use of Saboxone. It is helpful. Now partnerships need to kick in with service providers.

- There are issues at Living Space. The shelter did not happen the way it was supposed to be. There have been leaders that did not want service providers on site, but a lot of things happened that pushed organizations away.
- Living Space needs more Indigenous staff. I would like to see an Indigenous person running Living Space. We need different kinds of leadership. Constant changing of leadership at Living Space doesn't help.
- Having the CDSSAB managing Living Space is a short-term fix. Having only one Indigenous person on the Living Space Board of Directors is difficult. As Indigenous communities, we need to work together.

### **Living Space Relocation Review**

- The Relocation Review was done to appease people in the community.
- Look to what Peterborough is doing as a potential option for Timmins. Their downtown was being flooded by people and they've built mini houses and provided showers, bathrooms, and services.
- Treaty 9 should be part of this discussion.

### **Comments related to service providers**

- All the agencies in this room contributed to my recovery. It takes a community. I've lost friends and family, and everyone gave me a chance. Now I can help people struggling, help people access resources, and I can be there for them. We are all just people.
- We need to get everyone on the same page and share information. The worse thing we can do is send people from one person to another and another. By the time a person is referred to a third person, they're going to go back to their comfort zone.
- We need ways for Indigenous frontline workers to support each other. For example, how do we go to a sweat. Or ourselves access services? For example, I've been on a waiting list for two

- Some participants had negative experiences with staff in the emergency department of the hospital, noting that they need to change their attitude and not make assumptions on who First Nations people are.
- The hospital has an Indigenous Advisory Committee and they speak about complaints.
- Another participant said that their experience was different, nothing that people experiencing homelessness have been accepted into Emergency to sleep and the staff did not kick the person out.

### Other comments and suggestions

- After care is essential and necessary. It needs to be nurturing and not dwell on the things people did or spoke. They already have shame and guilt about things that have been done.
- Sexual abuse is an issue that needs to be addressed – it is contributing to how our people are suffering today. Kids are being raised in homes where people have sexually abused people. We need to speak up as communities because the next generation is being impacted. Victims are not able to tell their stories and they're blaming themselves. We need to speak up and educate.
- Mining companies are taking resources from our land and making millions of dollars. They provide token support but nothing of real value. We need to make it condition that if they're working in our area, then they need to help resolve issues.
- Partnering is better than doing nothing to move things forward. This could be with the City or others. Meeting with newcomers to Timmins could be another option since they seem to be organized and sometimes the focus of bad comments and miscommunication.
- We used to have a “building bridges” process in Timmins but now we can call it “burning bridges”. It went sideways and did not do what it was supposed to do. It never touched on homelessness.
- A participant shared concern about the potential municipalization of Indigenous communities by

the Canadian government. He explained that this involves a ten year package of money to sign away First Nations status and make Indigenous communities taxpayers. There was concern that this would mean people would not be able to stay in their communities and could lead to more people moving into the bush or living on the streets in Timmins.

- I am making a book for kids that speaks to our family's trauma. And I correct them when they use disrespectful terms.

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

- I don't want Living Space to be sent far away. It needs to be close to transit, medical services, grocery stores, meal providers, etc.
- Putting people on the highway is not a solution. This means “out-of-sight, out-of-mind”. It further marginalizes people that are already feeling left behind.

### Next steps:

The Third Party Public team committed to sharing a draft summary of the feedback from participants for their review to confirm nothing major from the discussion was missing or off-base. The same process will be followed for all working sessions held, with final summaries posted on the Relocation Review website. That way people can review all summaries and see the same inputs as the Relocation Review team.

In addition to in-person working sessions, there is an online feedback form at [www.livingspacereview.ca](http://www.livingspacereview.ca) that asks the same questions. That gives an opportunity to people who are 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.