



JOINT PRESS RELEASE

City of Penticton and snpink'tn Indian Band Respond to Encampment near Ellis Creek

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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The City of Penticton and the snpink'tn Indian Band are partnering with provincial agencies and community partners to respond to the growing encampment at the intersection of Highway 97 and Fairview Road. Located on unceded syilx territory and under provincial jurisdiction, the site hosts individuals experiencing homelessness, raising environmental, social, and economic concerns that require collaborative efforts respecting Indigenous title and governmental responsibility.

The encampment, adjacent to Ellis Creek, a vital fish-bearing waterway, which flows into the Okanagan River Channel, faces environmental degradation, including garbage accumulation and contamination, alongside public health and safety concerns. Its proximity to the ecologically sensitive Oxbows, also outside Penticton's bylaws, underscores the need for immediate and coordinated action.

The City of Penticton and snpink'tn Indian Band share four key goals:

1. **To treat unhoused individuals with compassion and dignity**, connecting them appropriate services and pathways to stable housing.
2. **To protect the local environment**, especially the ecological health of Ellis Creek, Okanagan River Channel and surrounding habitats including the neighbouring Oxbows
3. **To safeguard the public and restore the encampment area**, ensuring long-term safety and land rehabilitation.
4. **To mitigate the impacts of homelessness on tourism and the local economy**, particularly in a high-visibility area that is integral to Penticton's reputation as a destination community.

The Integrated Crisis Response Team (ICRT), RCMP, and social service partners conduct welfare checks, offering housing options and services, though many individuals face significant barriers and complex needs beyond current resources.

Working together towards urgent solutions

The City of Penticton and the snpink'tn Indian Band are actively working with the province, local agencies, and community partners to address the evolving situation at the Fairview encampment, which remains under provincial administration. Recognizing this shared challenge, all partners emphasize leadership, cooperation, and compassion.

"Our stewardship responsibilities—to both the people and the land—demand a thoughtful and coordinated approach," added Chief Greg Gabriel. "We cannot wait for conditions to worsen before meaningful action is taken."

"We all bring different responsibilities to the table, but the urgency of the situation demands that we keep working together—with compassion and focus—to support both the people and the place," said Mayor Julius Bloomfield. "There is no single solution or single authority. This is a collective effort, and we remain committed to being part of the response."

These joint efforts are working towards the provincial HEART & HEARTH program, that includes:

- More robust outreach and service connections for those sheltering at the site
- Confirmation of Temporary Winter Shelter (TWS) funding
- Advancing transitional housing options
- Mobilizing environmental cleanup and restoration resources.

Moving Forward

The City and the Band remain committed to collaborative solutions that uphold dignity, environmental responsibility, and community well-being. As we work toward long-term resolution and land restoration, we thank the public for their patience and continued support.

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