

OVERVIEW OF 2025

Council Subcommittee on Homelessness

March 17, 2026



— City of —
Saskatoon



Contents

A. INTRODUCTION	4
B. SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS	5
C. ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW	5
1. Indigenous Leadership Consultation (Collaborate/Co-Create)	6
2. Business Survey and Forum (Involve/Collaborate).....	6
3. Government (Involve/Collaborate).....	7
4. Community Stakeholders (Involve/Collaborate).....	7
5. Service Provider and Lived Experience Workshop (Involve)	8
6. Public Survey Results (Ask)	12
D. ACCOMPLISHMENTS.....	13
E. PREVIOUS NAVIGATION HUB RESOLUTIONS OF COUNCIL	13
F. NEXT STEPS.....	13
G. RECOMMENDATIONS.....	14
APPENDIX 1 –COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOMELESSNESS TERMS OF REFERENCE	15
APPENDIX 2 – SERVICE PROVIDER & LIVED EXPERIENCE FORUM: WHAT WE LEARNED	19
APPENDIX 3 – PREVIOUS NAVIGATION HUB RELATED COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS	29

LAND ACKNOWLEDGEMENT

Saskatoon is located on Treaty 6 Territory and the Traditional Homeland of the Métis. The City recognizes the distinct order of government of First Nations and Métis and is committed to maintaining strong relationships through meaningful dialogue with Indigenous communities and organizations. Strengthening cooperation and mutual support by working in partnership with Indigenous communities toward shared community goals and objectives is vital to fostering more inclusive communities.

This report is grounded in a relational approach to housing and well-being. The Subcommittee acknowledges that reconciliation requires honouring Indigenous leadership, ceremony, cultural protocols, and community-defined priorities throughout the development of solutions to support unhoused relatives¹.

¹ *The Subcommittee acknowledges the **2012 Indigenous Definition of Homelessness**, which emphasizes that Indigenous homelessness reflects disconnection from land, water, family, kin, culture, languages, and identity — not solely the absence of physical shelter. This document uses homelessness and unhoused interchangeably, both referencing this definition.*

A. INTRODUCTION

At its meeting on March 26, 2025, City Council established the Council Subcommittee on Homelessness (the Subcommittee) to activate partnerships and accelerate implementation to address homelessness. The Subcommittee's mandate includes supporting rapid implementation; engaging and collaborating with Indigenous rights holders from the outset; engaging stakeholders and other governments; and providing Council with "what we heard," advice, and recommendations including identified gaps, funding strategies, and other issues raised by the Subcommittee or Council. The full Terms of Reference are included in Appendix 1.

The Subcommittee was established to help move solutions forward by hearing directly from those affected by homelessness, strengthening relationships with Indigenous leadership and partners, and bringing informed advice to Council.

Engagement focused on people and organizations most impacted by homelessness and service delivery, including service providers, people with lived experience, Indigenous leaders, governments, businesses, and community partners.

From the beginning, the Subcommittee committed to working in partnership with Indigenous governments, Elders, Knowledge Keepers, and community organizations, recognizing that Indigenous peoples are disproportionately affected by homelessness in large part due to the ongoing impacts of colonial systems.

Our work has centred around the voices of those most impacted, as we honour Indigenous leadership in shaping the engagement process, governance considerations, and priorities for a navigation hub. This report reflects what we heard, lessons shared in ceremony and conversation, and the collective responsibilities ahead.

The Subcommittee has also worked closely with City administration, meeting consistently to focus dedicated attention on the complex challenges associated with Saskatoon's growing unhoused population. The focused discussions helped clarify emerging issues, strengthen our understanding of system pressures, and accelerate progress on several key workstreams.

Those most directly affected were engaged through more in-depth and collaborative approaches, while broader public input was gathered through the 2025 Civic Satisfaction and Performance Survey. A core role of the Subcommittee is to report back to Council on what was heard and what might be the next steps or recommendations. This report provides a one-year update on that work.

B. SUBCOMMITTEE MEMBERS

- Mayor Cynthia Block
- Councillor Holly Kelleher
- Councillor Scott Ford

C. ENGAGEMENT OVERVIEW

The Subcommittee prioritized hearing directly from those most affected by homelessness and the organizations that support them, using an **Orbits of Participation** approach to match the level of engagement to the level of impact and expertise.

Figure 1: Orbits of Participation



Over the past year, a series of engagements were organized to reach and connect with key persons and organizations in each orbit of influence, these are summarized below.

1. Indigenous Leadership Consultation (Collaborate/Co-Create)

The Subcommittee began in a good way by seeking guidance from Saskatoon Tribal Council (STC) Tribal Chief, Mark Arcand and Central Urban Metis Federation Inc. (CUMFI) President, Shirley Isbister on approaches to start the process. Both were involved in the strategy for engagement, participated in events, and endorsed the centralized hub model as the next step to alleviate homelessness in Saskatoon. The navigation hub concept was previously brought to Council through an administrative report ([Community Navigation Hub Feasibility Study](#)) which included a municipal scan of additional jurisdictions.

The Subcommittee notes that ongoing conversations with STC and CUMFI are vital to ensuring an Indigenous led, culturally grounded and responsive approach for the central navigation hub.

2. Business Survey and Forum (Involve/Collaborate)

In August 2025, an online survey was sent out to all Saskatoon businesses and 692 responses were received. The survey explored several areas; some of the comments related to the topic of homelessness included:

- Calls for better solutions for homelessness, addictions, shelters, and mental health services
- Businesses want a balance between compassionate solutions including housing, relocation, supports and stricter enforcement to remove tents and address loitering
- Increased initiatives to provide employment and accommodation opportunities for the unhoused
- Support programs for youth and families

On November 3, 2025, business leaders were invited to the Mayor's Business Forum to share ideas, explore priorities from the business survey, collaborate on City-Business partnerships and strengthen connections.

Some of the comments received related to homelessness included:

- Need a better solution to reduce number of encampments
- Need solutions that work for the unhoused, business community and entire city
- Need more solutions to prevent public intoxication
- Place the warmup centres and future shelters closer to the police station
- We need compassionate care (involuntary treatment)

What We Learned: The business community is willing to partner on solutions that pair compassion with public order, reinforcing the need for integrated strategies that connect immediate stabilization with longer term housing and supports.

3. Government (Involve/Collaborate)

Engagement with the Province of Saskatchewan is ongoing; notable achievements to date include:

- Summer partnership for drop-in and navigation at CUMFI, Station 20 and White Buffalo Youth Lodge
- Province announced annual funding to provide drop-in homelessness services 365 days per year in Saskatoon- beginning in Winter 2025
- Partnered with Province and STC for winter 2025/26 drop-in with the City responsible for the building and lease and; STC contracted for services.

What We Learned: The City, Province and Indigenous governments must continue to work in close coordination to deliver vital services and secure ongoing, recurrent funding streams to support seasonal initiatives including options for warming/cooling 24/7 while collaborating on long term strategies to address homelessness and housing.

4. Community Stakeholders (Involve/Collaborate)

An engagement session was held on November 13, 2025 with approximately 30 attendees representing Council, City administration and various community stakeholders. The purpose of the session was to engage a wide cross section of Saskatoon community members, many of whom may rarely be in the same room, to have an open dialogue on the issue of homelessness and to begin to create pathways to address core needs to build system capacity. The session was facilitated by Bloomberg-Harvard, as part of on-going work to help Saskatoon tackle homelessness. The Subcommittee wishes to acknowledge Bloomberg-Harvard for covering the costs of the engagement session.

Participants identified those affected by homelessness in Saskatoon and developed a visual diagram illustrating the wide range of groups affected by or actively engaged with homelessness.



What We Learned: There are few groups unaffected by homelessness in some way. Those without stable housing include children, youth and families and those unhoused often are suffering from untreated mental health and addiction challenges. It is clear this issue impacts the business community, and the visitor economy along with agencies and organizations tasked with providing support. It is also clear that providing supports, temporary housing and access to affordable, stable housing for those unhoused will, by extension, have a positive impact on the larger community.

5. Service Provider and Lived Experience Workshop (Collaborate/Co-create)

The City of Saskatoon is committed to ensuring everyone has a safe place to call home, and we recognize service providers and those with lived/living experience are essential partners in this work. The Subcommittee invited service providers and those with lived experience to attend an interactive workshop held on December 10, 2025 to share their perspectives. A total of 90 persons representing more than 35 organizations were invited to participate with approximately 100 participants attending.

The workshop created space for thoughtful, respectful, and collaborative dialogue among service providers, persons with lived experience, community members, students, and partners. Facilitation supported inclusive engagement through multiple ways to participate, including table discussions which were led by University of Saskatchewan and Oskayak High School students with the guidance of senior facilitators and engagement boards posted around the room.

To help support the rapid and successful implementation of initiatives to address homelessness in Saskatoon, the primary focus of the workshop was centered around the future Navigation Hub as described in the city's [Community Navigation Hub Feasibility Study](#).

The following is a summary of what we heard:

a. Navigation Hub Model

A Navigation Hub model emerged as a consistent, community-supported solution to improve access, coordination, and follow-up across services. Participants consistently identified that:

- Systems are fragmented, requiring individuals to navigate multiple entry points and repeat intake processes.
- Lack of coordinated navigation contributes to prolonged homelessness and housing instability.
- After-hours access, transportation, and culturally safe spaces are critical gaps.
- Indigenous-led governance and lived-experience involvement are essential to trust and effectiveness.

There was strong consensus that a Navigation Hub should **complement**, not replace, housing supply investments, existing services or entry points currently provided through multiple service providers.

b. What a Navigation Hub Is

Participants described a Navigation Hub as an **enabling social infrastructure**, not a housing program.

It provides:

- Culturally safe, trauma-informed service delivery
- Low-barrier access to stabilize and access immediate supports and referrals
- Assistance with ID, income supports, banking, housing applications, health and social services
- Relationship-based follow-up

Best practice and local feedback support a **networked model**, consisting of:

- A central Navigation Hub function

- Satellite access points embedded with existing service providers (*note this is already happening. Participants reiterated that both are needed)
- Mobile and outreach components

c. Immediate Needs Must Come First

Across all boards and discussions, there was strong consensus that **basic human needs must be met first** for people to stabilize and then engage with longer-term supports.

Top priorities consistently included:

- A welcoming safe place/space grounded in cultural belonging with cultural supports available
- Washrooms and showers
- Laundry
- Food and water (including evening meals)
- Daytime, low-barrier places to rest and stay warm
- Storage for personal belongings and bikes
- Phones, Wi-Fi, and access to technology
- Transportation supports, including after-hours options
- Clear pathways to shelter, transition housing and longer-term housing
- Access to warming/cooling (at all hours, not necessarily the same location)

Participants noted that without these basics, it is unrealistic to expect people to focus on housing applications, appointments, or recovery.

d. Services That Are Missing or Hard to Access

Participants identified significant gaps in access to:

- Identification services, a stable mailing address, banking assistance
- Income assistance and disability navigation (especially for people without an address)
- Housing referrals and rent education
- Emergency rent supplements and shelter diversion funding
- Transportation, including affordable and after-hours options
- Health care, including on-site or rotating clinicians
- Mental health and addictions support, with concern about long wait times
- Case management with follow-up, not just intake
- Childcare and family supports
- Support for people leaving corrections
- Support for newcomers, including cultural interpretation of systems

A recurring message was that programs do not count if their scale does not match the level of need.

e. Indigenous Leadership and Cultural Safety

Participants strongly emphasized that any Navigation Hub addressing homelessness in Saskatoon must be **Indigenous-led and culturally safe**, reflecting the reality that Indigenous people are disproportionately affected by homelessness.

What this means in practice includes:

- Guidance from Elders and Knowledge Keepers
- Access to ceremony, medicines, and cultural spaces
- Indigenous staff across roles, not tokenized positions
- Language, identity, and cultural reconnection supports
- Trauma-informed approaches grounded in Indigenous worldviews
- Intercultural inclusion that respects First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and urban Indigenous diversity

Participants cautioned against colonial approaches to data, governance, and security, emphasizing Indigenous data sovereignty (OCAP² principles), consent, and the use of peacekeeping rather than policing.

f. Location and Design Considerations

Participants held diverse views on specific locations but shared common principles:

- Proximity to transit and existing services matters
- One large, centralized site alone may create safety and capacity challenges, a main hub should work with hubs at existing service providers
- A **hybrid model** where there is a central hub and satellite or mobile hubs was widely supported. Satellite hubs and mobile outreach could be integrated with existing service providers.
- Mobile services were seen as especially important for after-hours outreach and accessibility
- Spaces must be welcoming, calm, and dignified, not institutional

g. Key Considerations

- **Governance:** Indigenous-led and inclusive of lived experience
- **Privacy:** Consent-based, minimum-necessary information sharing
- **Scope:** Clear definition to avoid duplication or unrealistic expectations
- **Phasing:** Pilot-based approach to manage risk and cost
- **Measurement:** Outcomes focused on access, follow-up, and housing connections

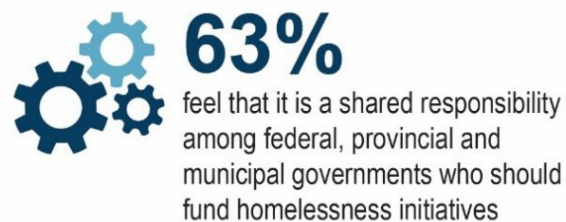
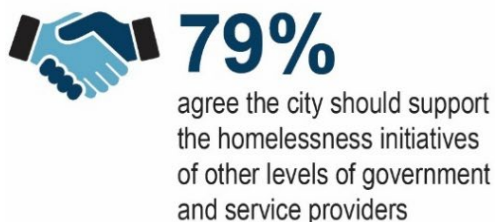
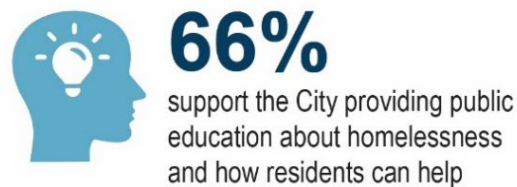
² [The First Nations Principles of OCAP® - The First Nations Information Governance Centre](#)

What We Learned: A central Navigation Hub is a practical, evidence-informed response to system gaps identified by residents, the unhoused, service providers, and City data. Advancing this model strengthens the impact of current housing investments and supports Council's objectives related to housing stability, reconciliation, and community well-being. Appendix 2 includes a more detailed report on what we learned.

6. Public Survey Results (Ask)

According to the 2025 Civic Satisfaction & Performance Survey the single most important issue facing the City is "Homelessness" which is cited by 35% of respondents. This was up 12 percentage points from 2024. Given that homelessness continues to be identified by respondents as the most pressing issue facing the City, additional questions were added to the 2025 survey.

The image below summarizes the relevant results:



What We Learned: The recent civic satisfaction survey highlighted a strong and compassionate message from Saskatoon residents: they want more coordinated and visible action to support people experiencing homelessness. Respondents not only identified this as a priority but also expressed a willingness to contribute to local solutions. Together, these findings underscore broad community interest in supporting enhanced services, such as a central navigation hub, through clear and trusted avenues, while continuing to explore practical ways for residents to participate in a collective response.

D. ACCOMPLISHMENTS

The following information provides an overview of accomplishments related to homelessness since the Subcommittee was established:

- **Province Announces year-round Drop-In Centres:**
 - **24/7 Outdoor Drop-In Centre (CUMFI):** Operated from June 23 to October 31, 2025, welcoming over 53,000 visits with zero incidents of vandalism or damage.
 - **Daytime Drop-In Centre (Station 20):** Opened June 30, 2025, with facility funding from the City of Saskatoon and operations led by Sawēyihotān supported by provincial funding.
 - **Winter Drop-In Centres:** A new 24/7 Drop-In Centre opened in December 2025 for women, alongside the Salvation Army's St. Mary's Overnight Winter Warming location for men.
- **Community Navigation Hub Feasibility Study:** Accelerated and received in October 2025, providing key insights to support the development of a year-round community Navigation Hub.
- **Indigenous Peacekeepers:** Building on the success of the CUMFI washroom project last summer, Peacekeepers helped create a safer environment and built trust with individuals experiencing homelessness increasing their willingness to connect with supports and services. In November, Council approved a one-year pilot to formalize and expand this model, with Peacekeepers working alongside Fire and Police to strengthen a coordinated, culturally grounded community response.

E. PREVIOUS NAVIGATION HUB RESOLUTIONS OF COUNCIL

Since 2024, City Council has made various resolutions related to the Navigation Hub. It is important to consider the directions already provided to Administration as it relates to any recommendations of the Subcommittee. Appendix 3 provides a summary of related Navigation Hub resolutions of Council.

F. NEXT STEPS

1. Navigation Hub exploration in close consultation with Indigenous partners:
 - a. Site selection/land purchase
 - b. Business plan options
 - c. Governance framework

2. On-going collaboration with Indigenous leadership, the Province, Federal Government on Housing and supports for those experiencing homelessness.
3. The Subcommittee will continue engaging community leaders and partners across Saskatoon to advance a coordinated, whole-city approach to addressing homelessness, guided by insights from public engagement. This work will focus on strengthening collective community support and collaboration. The Subcommittee will keep Council informed to ensure alignment, transparency, and shared accountability as initiatives evolve.

G. RECOMMENDATIONS

That the Subcommittee recommend to Council:

1. That the Subcommittee continues to provide oversight and strategic guidance on the next steps related to the development of a coordinated response to homelessness.
2. That Administration report back describing how current plans, such as the Saskatoon Homelessness Action Plan, the Community Safety and Well Being framework, the Housing Strategy, and other City activities related to homelessness, community safety and housing are aligned to support both current community needs and work towards longer term upstream approaches.

APPENDIX 1 –COUNCIL SUBCOMMITTEE ON HOMELESSNESS TERMS OF REFERENCE



Terms of Reference Council Subcommittee on Homelessness

1.0 Overview

The City of Saskatoon (City), multiple service providers, Indigenous Rights Holders, Elders, people with lived experience of homelessness, and stakeholders have been working collaboratively to develop a new plan to address homelessness in Saskatoon. The City is committed to ensuring Saskatoon residents and businesses have the opportunity to participate in developing solutions to homelessness.

The Council Subcommittee on Homelessness (the Subcommittee) is being established to activate partnerships to accelerate plans to address homelessness, and to ensure the community has the opportunity to have their voices heard by Council on the plan.

2.0 Mandate

The mandate of the Subcommittee is to:

- Support rapid, successful, implementation of initiatives to address homelessness in Saskatoon;
- Engage and collaborate with Indigenous Rights Holders from the onset, ensuring their direction, input, and leadership are integral to the Subcommittee work;
- Engage with community, stakeholders, and other levels of government;
- Provide a summary of “what we heard” from engagement activities, and advice, input, and recommendations to City Council for consideration respecting issues surrounding homelessness in the community, including:
 - Engagement and relationships with community;
 - Identification of gaps within current strategies;
 - Supporting existing work by the City, community partners, and other levels of government;
 - Funding strategies; and
 - Other issues identified by the Subcommittee or City Council.

The Subcommittee shall communicate its advice, input, and recommendations directly with the City Council and Administration, and not with other parties.

3.0 Reporting Relationship

The Subcommittee acts in an advisory and recommendation capacity and cannot make decisions on behalf of the City. The City Administration may seek the Subcommittee’s advice, input, and recommendations regarding various aspects of projects related to Homelessness. Formal recommendations from the Subcommittee shall be presented in the form of public reports to City Council.

4.0 Composition

- Members:
 - Mayor of the City of Saskatoon – Chair of the Subcommittee;
 - City Council Strategic Priority Area Lead on Housing and Homelessness;
 - City Council Strategic Priority Area Lead on Community Safety; and
 - One (1) additional member of City Council as appointed by City Council.
- Representatives from the City Administration, including the City Manager, City Clerk, and appropriate members of the Administration as determined by the City Manager will provide information and support to the Subcommittee.

5.0 Appointment and Term

- Members:
 - Appointed by City Council and considered on an annual basis, or sooner where may be recommended by the Subcommittee.

6.0 Principles

The Advisory Group will operate under the following principles in carrying out its mandate:

- *Integrity* – a commitment to interact with honesty and to provide advice, input, and recommendations in the best interest of supporting successful outcomes;
- *Respect* – appreciation of individual participation in the Subcommittee process in a manner acceptable among members, and a shared respect in leveraging each other's expertise to ensure positive outcomes for the whole community;
- *Consensus* – a commitment to work towards general agreement on matters where members openly discuss ideas, perspectives, and viewpoints; seek to develop common ground; and narrow areas of disagreement to the best of their ability. Consensus-based decision-making does not require unanimity but is such that everyone can agree they can abide by the decision. Differing viewpoints and opinions will be documented in meeting minutes; and
- *Communication* – a commitment to attend meetings and respond to any other communication in a timely manner.

Where a member breaks any of the principles, the Chair will establish a mediation session to resolve the breach. The Subcommittee will address each situation on a case-by-case basis where a member is not amenable to mediation, with ultimate authority with City Council as per relevant legislation.

7.0 Confidentiality

- Members are bound to maintain the confidentiality of information received in their capacity as members of the Subcommittee. Information that is confidential, proprietary to any Stakeholder, Civic Board, Commission, Authority, Committee, the City of Saskatoon or non-public must not be divulged to anyone other than persons who are authorized to receive the information.
- City Administration will be clear when sharing confidential information and will remind the Subcommittee members not to share this information publicly.
- Subcommittee members are asked to distinguish between things that the Subcommittee and City are considering and things that are already decided.

8.0 Conflict of Interest

- Members must avoid any conflict of interest, or the appearance of a conflict between their own personal interests or the interests of any closely connected person, and the interests

of the Subcommittee or the City. Members must attempt to avoid not only actual conflict, but the potential for conflict.

- A member is in a conflict of interest where the member, a closely connected person, or a corporation in which the member or closely connected person has a controlling interest or a monetary interest in a matter before the Subcommittee, in accordance with The Cities Act.

9.0 Role of the Chair

The role of the Chair is to:

- Set the agenda for meetings;
- Preside at the meetings and keep the discussion on topic;
- Provide leadership to the Subcommittee to encourage that its activities remain focused on its mandate;
- Designate an alternative Subcommittee member to act as Chair in cases where they are unable to join a scheduled meeting;
- Act as the spokesperson for the Subcommittee for media and other inquiries; and
- Address City Council or Committees of City Council on behalf of the Advisory Group.

10.0 Role of Members

The role of Subcommittee members is to:

- Conduct affairs using the principles set out in these terms of reference;
- Ensure the mandate of the Subcommittee is fulfilled;
- Attempt to anticipate potential problems and offer options for resolving them;
- Prepare to actively participate in discussion items at Subcommittee meetings;
- Review documents and reports related to the mandate of the Subcommittee;
- Conduct research and analysis to inform the Subcommittee's advice;
- Write letters or reports to communicate the Subcommittee's advice;
- Consult with the Chair to request agenda items be added to meetings; and
- Notify the Chair if they are unable to attend meetings in order to ensure quorum will be available for all meetings.

11.0 Role of Administration

The role of the Administration is to:

- Prepare materials, reports, and presentations for the Subcommittee's review, advice, input, and recommendations as directed by City Council.

12.0 Media

- The City, in consultation with the Subcommittee and Council, will arrange and conduct all media relations with respect to the project, notwithstanding the role of the Chair to act as the spokesperson for media inquiries.

13.0 Quorum

- Quorum is met by 3 members of the Subcommittee, notwithstanding the ability of the members to assign aspects of community and/or stakeholder consultation to a smaller group.

14.0 Meetings

- Meetings will be at the call of the Chair. The duration of each meeting is subject to the contents of the agenda and ensuing discussion. Meetings are not public, unless determined by the Subcommittee.

15.0 Meeting Support

- The City Clerk's Office shall provide administrative support to meetings of the Subcommittee as may be required.

16.0 Remuneration

- The Subcommittee has the authority, with approval from the City Clerk's Office, in consultation with Indigenous Initiatives Department, to provide honorariums consistent with standard practice to members of the indigenous community providing traditional knowledge and guidance.

17.0 Amendment of Terms of Reference

- These terms of reference are approved by City of Saskatoon City Council and can only be amended by a majority vote of City of Saskatoon City Council.

18.0 Resource Documents

- [*The Cities Act*](#).
- [*Policy No. C01-003, Appointments to Civic Boards, Commissions, Authorities, and Committees*](#), which includes the attached *City of Saskatoon Code of Conduct for Members of Civic Boards, Commissions, Authorities and Committees* and *City of Saskatoon Anti-Harassment Policy for Members of Civic Boards, Commissions, Authorities and Committees*.
- Any other policies as required.

APPENDIX 2 – SERVICE PROVIDER & LIVED EXPERIENCE FORUM: WHAT WE LEARNED

Building Saskatoon’s Community Navigation Hub Network

December 10, 2025

Introduction: Reflections on the Forum

The December 10, 2025 Service Provider and Lived Experience Event created space for thoughtful, respectful, and collaborative dialogue among service providers, persons with lived experience, community members, students, and partners. The day began with a smudge and offered ongoing access to smudging throughout registration and participation. Knowledge Keepers Judy Greyeyes and Rick Daniels attended and offered opening and closing prayers. This helped establish a tone of respect, reconciliation, and shared responsibility.

Facilitation supported inclusive engagement through multiple ways to participate, including table discussions and engagement boards. Participants moved through the space efficiently, and discussions were calm, constructive, and solution oriented. University students, who just completed an Introduction to Indigenous Wellness class, played a strong role in facilitation and note-taking, contributing positively to the flow and depth of conversation. It was both an income earning and learning experience for the University students. Students from Oskayak High School also attended to help with registration and participate in discussions. Students received a gift card and letters of reference for their efforts. Participants with lived experience were invited and also received a gift card for attending and providing valuable insight.

A few areas of improvement can be made for future events. A larger and more accessible venue, clearer board design to support data capture, and stronger participation from youth, people with lived experience, and City staff at table discussions are key areas to improve. These reflections are important context for interpreting what was heard and for strengthening future engagement.

Overall, the event demonstrated a strong shared commitment across the community to improving coordination, reducing barriers, and building pathways out of homelessness. The following summary reflects the key themes, priorities, and cautions raised by participants throughout the day.

1. Shared Understanding of the Challenge

Participants consistently emphasized that homelessness in Saskatoon is **systemic, not individual**, and cannot be addressed through isolated programs or short-term fixes. Many noted that people experiencing homelessness are navigating overlapping barriers related to housing availability, income assistance rules, health and mental health systems, colonial trauma, and service fragmentation.

There was broad agreement that while many services already exist, **the system does not work as a system**. Gaps, duplication, and policy barriers often leave people cycling between services without achieving stability.

2. What a Navigation Hub Is — and Is Not

Participants described a Navigation Hub as:

- A **low-barrier, trusted place** where people can meet immediate basic needs and be actively connected to longer-term supports.
- A place focused on **relationships, follow-up, and coordination**, not simply referrals.
- A place people can return to repeatedly, building familiarity and trust.

Equally important, participants were clear about what a hub should **not** be:

- Not just a map or list of services.
- Not a 9–5 model.
- Not a place that sends people back out to navigate systems alone.
- Not a replacement for housing.

Many stressed that if accessing help takes more than a day or two, people are unlikely to follow through.

3. Immediate Needs Must Come First

Across all boards and discussions, there was strong consensus that **basic human needs must be met first** in order for people to stabilize and engage with longer-term supports.

Top priorities consistently included:

- A welcoming safe place/space grounded in cultural belonging with cultural supports available
 - Washrooms and showers
 - Laundry
 - Food and water (including evening meals)
 - Daytime, low-barrier places to rest and stay warm
 - Storage for personal belongings and bikes
 - Phones, Wi-Fi, and access to technology
 - Transportation supports, including after-hours options
 - Clear pathways to shelter, transition housing and longer-term housing
 - Access to warming/cooling (at all hours, not necessarily the same location)

Participants noted that without these basics, it is unrealistic to expect people to focus on housing applications, appointments, or recovery.

4. Services That Are Missing or Hard to Access

Participants identified significant gaps in access to:

- **Identification services**, including a stable mailing address, access to banking
- **Income assistance and disability navigation**, especially for people without an address
- **Housing referrals and rent education**
- **Emergency rent supplements and shelter diversion funding**
- **Transportation**, including affordable and after-hours options
- **Health care**, including on-site or rotating clinicians
- **Mental health and addictions support**, with concern about long wait times
- **Case management with follow-up**, not just intake
- **Childcare and family supports**
- **Support for people leaving corrections**
- **Support for newcomers**, including cultural interpretation of systems

A recurring message was that programs do not count if their **scale does not match the level of need**.

5. Indigenous Leadership and Cultural Safety

Participants strongly emphasized that any Navigation Hub addressing homelessness in Saskatoon must be **Indigenous-led and culturally safe**, reflecting the reality that Indigenous people are disproportionately affected by homelessness.

What this means in practice includes:

- Guidance from Elders and Knowledge Keepers
- Access to ceremony, medicines, and cultural spaces
- Indigenous staff across roles, not tokenized positions
- Language, identity, and cultural reconnection supports
- Trauma-informed approaches grounded in Indigenous worldviews
- Intercultural inclusion that respects First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and urban Indigenous diversity

Participants cautioned against colonial approaches to data, governance, and security, emphasizing Indigenous data sovereignty, consent, and the use of peacekeeping rather than policing.

6. Location and Design Considerations

Participants held diverse views on specific locations but shared common principles:

- Proximity to transit and existing services matters
- One large, centralized site alone may create safety and capacity challenges
- A **hybrid model** — central hub plus satellite or mobile hubs — was widely supported
- Mobile services were seen as especially important for after-hours outreach and accessibility
- Spaces must be welcoming, calm, and dignified, not institutional

Many noted that **any hub will quickly be at capacity**, reinforcing the need for flexibility and scalability.

7. Service Coordination and Data Sharing

There was strong agreement that current systems are fragmented and difficult to navigate, both for clients and for service providers.

Participants identified the need for:

- Clear, consent-based information sharing
- Reduced duplication of intake and paperwork
- Plain-language processes
- In-person coordination, not just online tools
- A single, easy-to-access point of contact (e.g., one phone number)
- Embedded provincial decision-makers to address income assistance, ID, and corrections-related barriers

Participants cautioned that coordination tools must respect privacy, Indigenous data sovereignty, and frontline capacity.

8. Governance, Leadership, and Partnerships

Participants expressed little support for a single organization “owning” a Navigation Hub. Instead, there was strong preference for:

- **Collaborative, Indigenous-led governance**
- Inclusion of lived experience voices and youth
- A non-profit or Indigenous organization as an operational lead
- Governments as funders, enablers, and policy partners rather than operators
- Clear accountability for staffing, maintenance, and coordination

The City of Saskatoon was seen as having an important role in convening partners, providing land or resources, and advocating to other orders of government.

9. Risks and Cautions

Key risks raised included:

- Chronic underfunding, especially for operations
- Policy barriers turning solutions into new obstacles
- Burnout among frontline workers
- Over-centralization creating safety issues
- Duplication driven by funding silos
- Loss of trust if cultural safety is not real or sustained

Participants emphasized that **doing nothing or moving too slowly also carries risk**, given the urgency of current needs.

Closing Reflections

Participants were clear that a Navigation Hub is **necessary but not sufficient on its own**. It must be part of a broader, coordinated housing and systems response, grounded in Indigenous leadership, focused on dignity and relationships, and supported by sustained funding and policy alignment.

The forum demonstrated strong community willingness to collaborate. Future engagement that more fully includes youth, people with lived experience, and active participation from City staff will further strengthen this work.

Appendix A

Synthesis of Table notes and Poster boards from December 10th Service Provider and Lived Experience Event

1. Government's Role in Housing

(Context-setting board)

Shared understanding of roles

- **Federal government:** Primary policy and capital funder (National Housing Strategy, Rapid Housing Initiative, Housing Accelerator Fund, Reaching Home); immigration policy affects demand.
- **Provincial government:** Housing system operator; funds social/supportive housing operations; controls income assistance, rent supports, health, mental health, addictions, corrections, child and family services; operates Saskatchewan Housing Corporation.
- **City of Saskatoon:** System builder and connector (not a housing provider); zoning, land use, incentives, land contributions; convenes partners; advocates to Province and Canada; presents shelter and hub options.

Key tension raised

The City is expected to **coordinate and enable**, but participants repeatedly noted that **many core barriers (income assistance rules, ID access, corrections discharge, health services)** sit at the provincial level and require embedded provincial presence to resolve effectively

2. What Is a Navigation Hub?

Core definition (strong alignment across materials)

- A **single, low-barrier, trusted place** where people can meet immediate basic needs *and* be actively connected to longer-term supports (housing, health, income, culture), with follow-up in one location rather than referrals alone.

Foundational principles

- Low-barrier and non-judgmental
- Indigenous-led and culturally safe
- Trauma-informed
- Coordinated access (not siloed referrals)
- Relationship-based, not transactional

What distinguishes a hub from “a map of services”

- Services are **co-located or brought in**
- Follow-up happens **in the same place**
- Transportation is part of the model
- People are not sent back out to navigate systems alone

Participants consistently emphasized that *if support takes more than a day to access, many people simply won't go*

3. Location & Facility Design

What matters more than a specific address

- Accessibility (walkability + transit)
- Proximity to existing services
- Ability to operate **extended hours/24-hours**
- Space for dignity, safety, and calm
- Capacity to expand (any hub will fill immediately)

Location perspectives

- **Downtown/near transit terminal:** Proximity to services and population most affected.
- **20th Street/Station 20 West area:** Service density, though transit challenges noted.
- **Hybrid model strongly supported:**
 - One central hub **plus satellite or mobile hubs**
 - Shuttle or mobile services to reduce pressure on a single site
- **Mobile hub concept (buses):** Strong support for flexibility, after-hours outreach, and reaching people where they are.

- **Specific sites raised:** Old bus depot (23rd & Pacific), old library, Sask Polytech area, Station 20 West, shelters with attached hubs.
- **Cautions:**
 - Avoid concentrating too many people in one place (safety, gang dynamics).
 - Downtown triggers (drug exposure, pressure) for some individuals.

Facility priorities (from dot-polling)

Highest priorities:

- Washrooms, showers
- Food and water
- Laundry
- Medical/triage
- Income support access
- Storage/lockers
- Drop-in daytime space (shelters currently close during the day)

Clear message: **meet physical needs first**, then stabilization and pathways to services

4. What Services Should Be Offered?

(What's missing/what should be in the hub)

Immediate/basic needs

- 24/7 washrooms, showers, laundry
- Food, water, evening meals
- Daytime warm/safe places to rest
- Storage lockers (bags, bikes, documents)
- Phones, Wi-Fi, computers, printers
- Hygiene supplies and clothing
- Culturally grounded supports

Stabilization & navigation

- ID services (status cards, birth certificates, mailing address, banking access)
- Income assistance and disability navigation
- Housing referrals and rent education
- Emergency rent supplements/diversion funds
- Case management with follow-up
- Financial literacy and bill support
- Transportation (bus passes, shuttles, rides)

Health & wellness

- On-site or rotating clinicians (nurse practitioners, LPNs/RNs)
- Mental health and addiction supports (reduced wait times)
- Harm reduction supplies
- Wound care and sexual health services
- Safe spaces for intoxication (where appropriate)

Families, youth, and equity supports

- Childcare and baby supplies
- Youth-specific spaces and advocates
- Supports for women, parents, and people leaving corrections
- Newcomer navigation and cultural interpretation (not just language translation)

Cultural and community supports

- Elders on site
- Smudge spaces and medicines
- Cultural programming (beading, ribbon skirts, bannock)
- Language classes (Cree, Michif, others)
- Intercultural spaces (Indigenous-led but inclusive)

Repeated warning: **Programs do not count if scale does not match need**—capacity must reflect the number of unhoused people in the city.

5. Indigenous Leadership & Cultural Safety

What “Indigenous-led” means in practice

- Guided by the **AFN Framework on Ending Indigenous Homelessness**
- Culture centered, not added on
- Trauma and colonization informed
- Prevention of family separation
- Long-term relationships over short-term programs

Key elements identified

- Elders as guides, advisors, and relational anchors (from multiple Nations)
- Ceremonial spaces (smudging, circles, medicines)
- Cultural activities for youth and adults
- Language and identity reconnection
- Intercultural inclusion (First Nations, Métis, Inuit, newcomers)
- Indigenous staff across roles (not tokenized)

Strong cautions

- Avoid colonial data practices; data must align with **OCAP principles**
- Security framed as **peacekeeping**, not policing
- Indigenous leadership should not be constrained by colonial funding models
- Cultural safety must be **everyday practice**, not confined to one room

Participants repeatedly stated: *without safety and belonging, people cannot move toward stability.*

6. Service Coordination & Data Sharing

What's broken

- Siloed services and duplicated intake
- Referrals that go nowhere
- Incompatible or under-used databases
- Policies that require addresses people don't have
- Long waits that derail momentum

What's needed

- A **single, consent-based access system**
- Clear ownership of referrals (who is responsible)
- Plain-language processes
- In-person coordination (not just websites)
- One phone number / place to call 24/7
- Provincial staff embedded in the hub to resolve income assistance, ID, and corrections transitions

Data principles

- Share only what's necessary
- Respect Indigenous data sovereignty
- Use what already works (don't rebuild systems that exist)
- Reduce administrative burden on frontline workers

Consensus: coordination fails when systems serve policy instead of people.

7. Partners, Governance & Leadership

Who should lead

- Strong resistance to a single "owner"
- Preference for **collaborative, Indigenous-led governance**
- Non-profit or Indigenous organization as operational lead
- Elders involved, but leadership shared
- Lived-experience voices in decision-making
- Youth representation

Governance models suggested

- Board or council with:
 - Indigenous organizations
 - Service providers
 - City and Province (funders, not operators)
 - Health, justice, housing representation
- One entity responsible for coordination, staffing, and maintenance

City's role

- Provide land, funding, advocacy, and convening
- Support partnerships (including P3 models)
- Adjust policies and zoning
- Do **not** operate the hub

Strong theme: *collaboration works best when no single organization carries all the weight.*

8. Risks & Key Concerns

Risks identified

- Chronic underfunding (especially operating funds)
- Duplication driven by funding silos
- Safety if scale and staffing are inadequate
- Burnout of frontline workers
- Policy constraints turning “solutions” into new barriers
- Over-centralization creating unsafe concentrations
- Data misuse or loss of Indigenous sovereignty

Mitigations suggested

- Phased implementation
- Distributed hubs + mobile services
- Embedded provincial decision-makers
- Sustainable operating funding
- Clear accountability and shared responsibility

Bottom Line (Cross-cutting Insight)

Across all materials, participants were clear:

A navigation hub is necessary—but it will fail if it stands alone.

It must be Indigenous-led, relational, adequately funded, policy-enabled, and embedded in a broader housing and systems response.

APPENDIX 3 – PREVIOUS NAVIGATION HUB RELATED COUNCIL RESOLUTIONS

December 12, 2024 – Special Council Meeting

3. That a capital project in the amount of \$4,483,122 be established, funded by the Government of Canada which will be used to support the development of new supportive housing units combined with a community space, as well as the development of a feasibility study for a future Community Navigation Centre;”
and

Status: capital project

7. That the Administration bring forward the results of the feasibility study for information once complete.”

July 16, 2025 – Governance & Priorities Meeting

2. That Administration report back, by October 2025, with regards to:

- The results of the Navigation Hub Feasibility Study that was part of the City of Saskatoon's Community Encampment Response Plan and referred to in Appendix 2 of the Approval Report;
- Options for site locations to support a potential navigation hub or hubs and design concept;
- Options for funding models including how fundraising could be incorporated for both operating and capital components; in addition to government funding;
- Opportunities to fast-track/expedite the development of a navigation hub(s), including implications for the City of Saskatoon and potential next steps.”

October 29, 2025 – City Council

That the City move forward with planning for a Central Navigation Hub, and direct Administration to report back by Q2 2026:

1. With land options for a hub site, including consideration of accessibility, proximity to existing service networks, and compatibility with land use and safety policies;

2. Present options for both traditional and modular construction, including timelines and cost estimates;

3. Develop funding and operating models in collaboration with, and contingent upon, commitments from the Government of Saskatchewan, the Government of Canada, Indigenous governments, and local service providers; and

4. Include recommendations for interim or temporary measures that could be implemented within 12 months in conjunction with existing service providers, while the permanent hub is being developed.