



A City Response to Homelessness

- A collaborative recommendation from the City of Minneapolis

Agenda

Introduction to Legislative Directive

Overview of the City's response to homelessness with the responsibility to uphold Minneapolis Code of Ordinances 244.60

The Need

Overview of the health and safety risks encampments present and sharing community requests for help

Roles, Responsibilities and Progression of Work

Overview of the City stakeholders who respond to homeless encampments, offer assistance to unsheltered individuals, and work with the community

Case Studies and Fiscal Analysis

Fiscal analysis detailing encampment closure costs
Fiscal analysis detailing the cost of not closing encampments



The image shows a cluttered outdoor area, possibly a construction or demolition site. In the foreground, there are numerous propane tanks of various sizes and colors (brown, white, red, grey) lined up on a paved surface. Some tanks have labels like 'PRO' and 'GAS'. To the right, there is a pile of debris including cardboard boxes, a blue plastic container, and a white chair. In the background, there are several workers wearing high-visibility yellow vests and hard hats. They are standing near a structure that appears to be a temporary shelter or a partially demolished building. The ground is covered with various items, including a blue tarp and a traffic cone. The overall scene suggests a busy, organized site of activity.

Section One

Introduction to Legislative Directive

Our Guiding Principles

- The City of Minneapolis is committed to providing dignified support for unsheltered individuals.
- The City makes an objective assessment of encampment conditions based on health and safety risk factors.

Everyone experiencing unsheltered homelessness is vulnerable and deserves dignified and respectful treatment of their rights.

Every effort must be made to connect people to housing, shelter and services.

Encampments are a serious public health and safety risk, especially for those staying in the encampment, and are not a dignified form of shelter.

A photograph of an outdoor homeless encampment. In the foreground, there is a metal cart with a yellow and blue jug, a tire, and other items. The ground is covered with debris, including plastic bottles and a red cup. In the middle ground, there are several tents and tarps, some covered with blue and red patterned fabric. A large blue tarp is draped over a structure. In the background, there are trees and a white van. The scene is set outdoors with sunlight filtering through the trees.

City Response to Homelessness

- The City of Minneapolis is not a direct service provider but, refers individuals to services that best fit their needs.
- Unsheltered individuals occupying encampments are offered resources and services at every interaction.
- The City recognizes that people have a right to their own agency in choosing where they live.
- However, the City cannot normalize homelessness as an acceptable standard of living and ignore the dangers this presents to unsheltered individuals and surrounding communities.

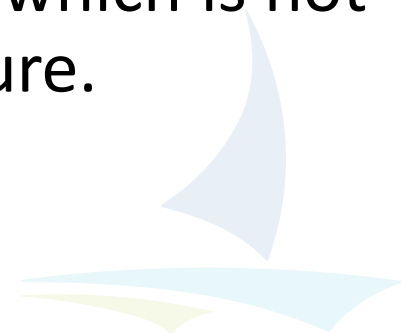
Minneapolis Code of Ordinances 244.60

(a) Unless otherwise provided in this section, no camp car, house trailer, automobile, tent or other temporary structure may be parked or placed upon any public street or on any public or private premises or street in the city and used as a shelter or enclosure of persons and their effects for the purpose of living therein.

Minneapolis Code of Ordinances 244.60

Housing Definitions Explained

- **Dwelling:** Any building or structure, or portion thereof, except temporary housing, which is wholly or partly used or intended to be used for living or sleeping by human occupants.
- **Dwelling unit:** Any habitable room located within a dwelling and forming a single habitable unit with facilities which are used or intended to be used for living, sleeping, cooking and eating.
- **Temporary housing:** Any tent, trailer or other structure used for human shelter which is designed to be transportable and which is not permanently attached to the ground or to another structure.





Section Two

The Need

Why are Encampments a Public Safety Concern?

- Encampments create health and safety risks for the people occupying them, as well as the surrounding community.
- The City must balance the needs of unsheltered individuals, community members, and business owners in responding to encampments.



HEALTH AND SAFETY CONCERNS



- Open drug use
- Used needles left on the street and sidewalk



- Living conditions that do not meet safe housing standards



- Trash and odors
- Infestation



- Property damage
- Defecation in public spaces



- Violent crime
- People experiencing burglary, threats, assaults and theft



- Water and electricity being taken from nearby properties

RESOURCES AND SERVICES



Hennepin County for housing assessments and/or case management



Healthcare for the Homeless partnership for medical attention



Service providers or assigned case workers



Shelter services



Downtown Improvement District partnership for storage services



Transportation services to these and other resources

Section Three

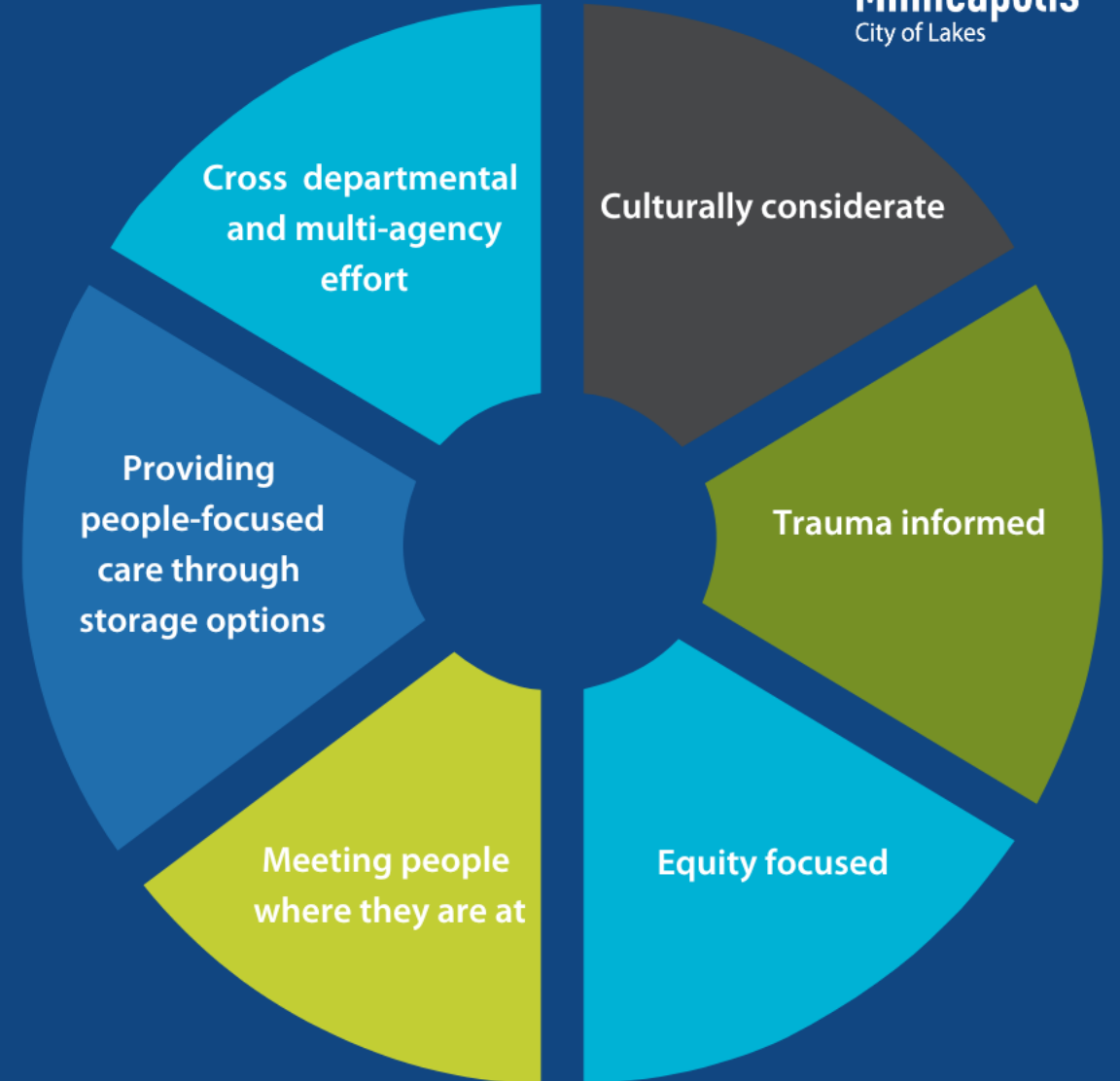
Roles and Responsibilities

Progression of Work



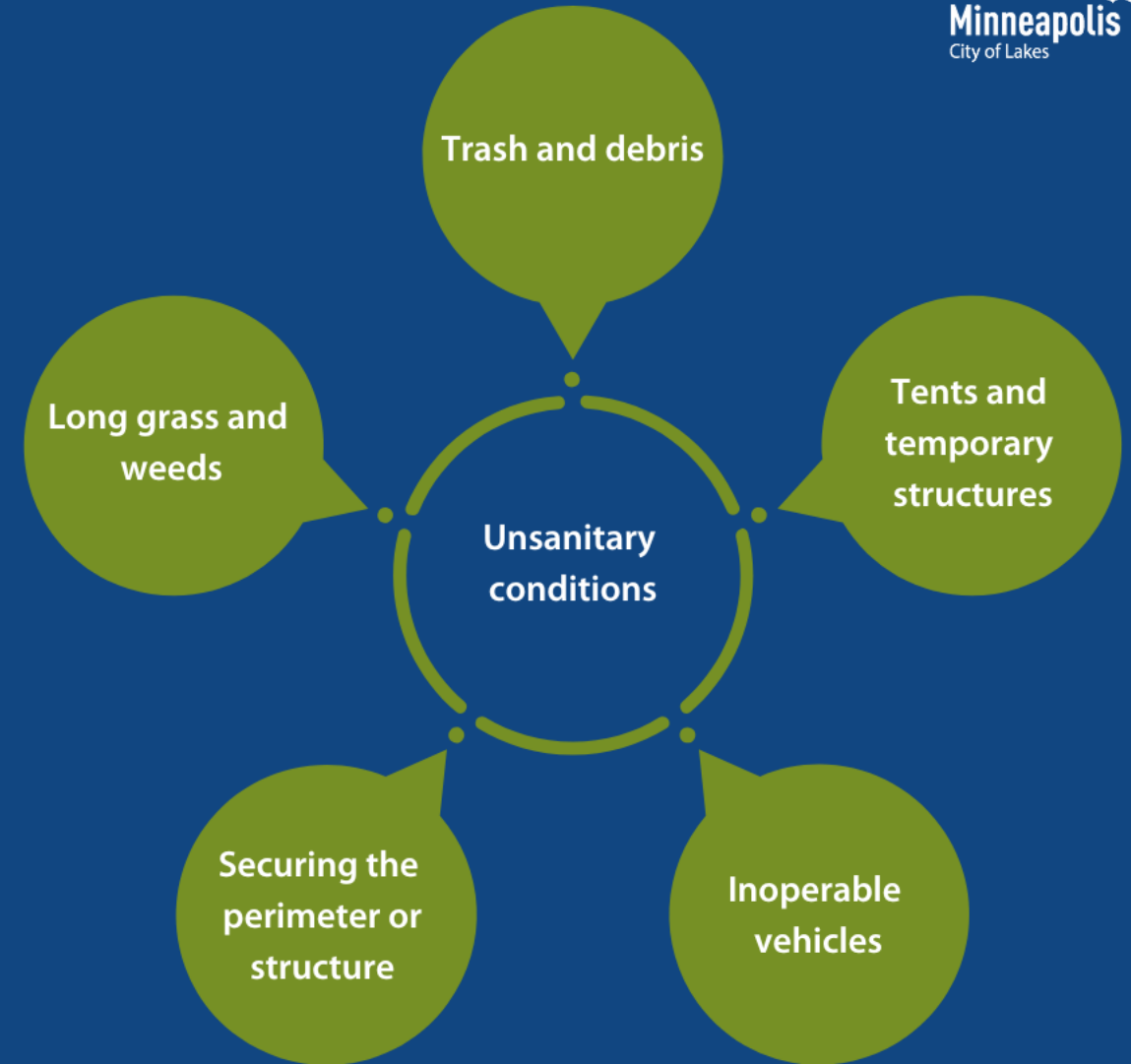
Homeless Response Team

- The Homeless Response Team connects unsheltered individuals to resources and services and also uphold public health and safety.
- Specializes in social work, rapid re-housing, and working with unsheltered populations facing mental health and substance abuse issues.
 - HRT is in the field five days a week. Daily engagement at encampment sites is a central part of their approach.
 - Centered on the rights of unsheltered individuals with dignified and respectful treatment to reduce barriers and increase access to resources, services and shelter that are basic human rights.



Inspections Services

- When encampments are identified on private property, a City inspector may visit the site to evaluate property conditions, conformity with existing zoning, building, and housing maintenance codes, citing any notable violations of Minneapolis Code of Ordinances violations.
- The property owner must ensure the upkeep, safety, security, and continued maintenance of the property in compliance with Minneapolis zoning, building, and housing maintenance codes.



Traffic Control

- During encampment closures, Traffic Control plays a critical role in maintaining community safety for:
 - Unsheltered individuals
 - Neighborhood residents
 - City staff
 - Allowing school buses to safely pass through encampment perimeters.

Maintains public safety by directing traffic away from the site.

Ensures expeditions traffic flow, pedestrian safety, and access for clean-up equipment.

Provides critical support for all involved with encampments and the closure of these sites.

Partner with MPD on all public safety measures.

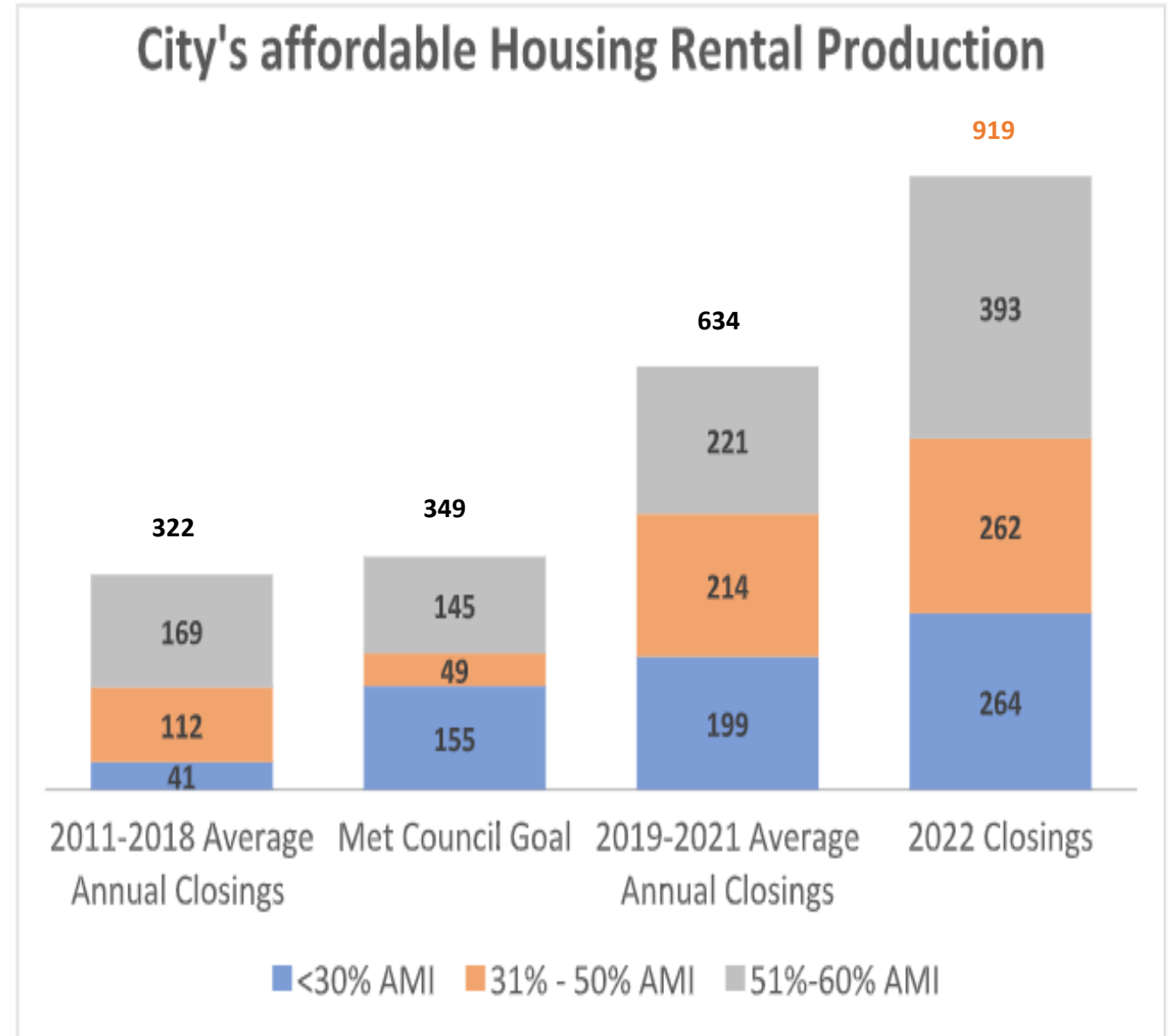
Cross Departmental City Review Team

- The Cross-Department City Review Team meets weekly to review data, health, safety, and community impact for a coordinated response for encampment closure recommendations that includes targeted outreach, engagement, and storage
- The team makes an objective assessment of encampment conditions based on the following risk factors:
 - Community livability impact including, but not limited to, the geographic size, number of unsheltered individuals, proximity to schools, parks, businesses, and residents, and 911/311 calls for service volume.
 - Health impact-including, but not limited to, presence of pregnant individuals, minors, hygiene, and environmental conditions and other conditions at encampment sites that increase the health risks of individuals at the encampment or in the community.
 - Life-Safety impact including, but not limited to, unstable structures, weather conditions, drug use, violence, propane tanks, and illegal activity.
 - External impact including, but not limited to, accounts from neighbors and business owners, and imminent development, demolition, or renovation.



Community Planning and Economic Development

- Produce more affordable rental housing with emphasis on deeply affordable units
- Support low-income renters through legal representation
- Preserve unsubsidized naturally occurring affordable housing units
- Emergency Rental Assistance
- Stable Homes Stable Schools
- Support to shelters
- Joint Powers Agreement with Hennepin County



Public Works

- Critical function in supporting public health, safety, and nuisance abatement efforts leading up to a closure by providing regular trash and debris clean up.
- Operates and maintain public infrastructure for all who live, work, and visit Minneapolis.



Minneapolis Police Department

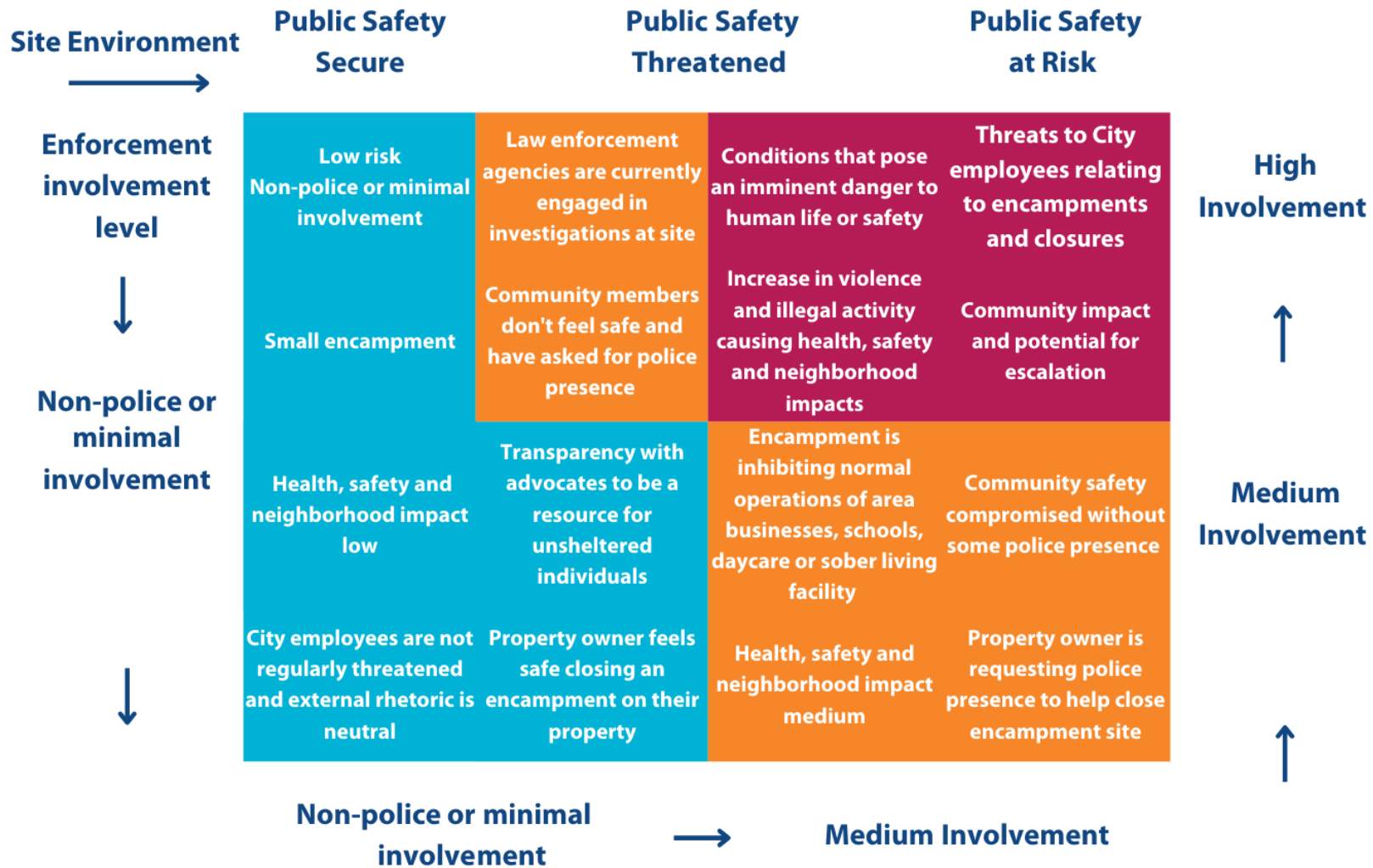
- The level of police involvement is based on the following factors:



- The chart on the following slide delineates three possible types of police involvement during encampment closures.



Law Enforcement Presence Guidelines





Section Four

Fiscal Analysis and Case Studies

Fiscal analysis

Method for the fiscal analysis was to focus on directly quantifiable costs, while recognizing broader costs to residents, businesses and visitors—including to unsheltered individuals occupying encampments.



Fiscal analysis

- Encampments incur costs from day 1 through closure. Generally, larger encampments where public safety is at risk cost more to provide services to and to close:
 - Prior to closure, individual encampments require routine city services costing upward of \$50,000 each, annually, especially waste disposal. Ad hoc city services including public health, law enforcement, 311 support, 911 calls, etc. are not quantified.
 - Closure activities range between \$40,000 to \$265,000 in total cost depending on conditions, with factors requiring police presence being the clearest contributor to cost.
- Other costs to consider:
 - Externalities, e.g. insurance requirements for nearby properties such as the Currie Commons affordable housing development.
 - Opportunity cost, e.g. decisions on how to support and close encampments both cost resources, and reduces amount of resources available to address root causes of homelessness.



Case Studies – City Owned Property

205 Girard Avenue North

Before



After



1520 New Brighton Boulevard



Case Studies – Private Property

2901 Blaisdell

2840 and 2844 Bloomington



Progression of Encampment Work

- The City has moved through the first phase of encampment work.
 - Data collection
 - Web site creation
 - Operational guide for City-owned properties
- Phase two plans to expand on the public health crisis that addresses the root causes of homelessness, led by the Health Department

Focus on information sharing across jurisdictions and government entities

Transfer of contracts to allow the County to direct more services

Minimize enforcement presence during encampment closures

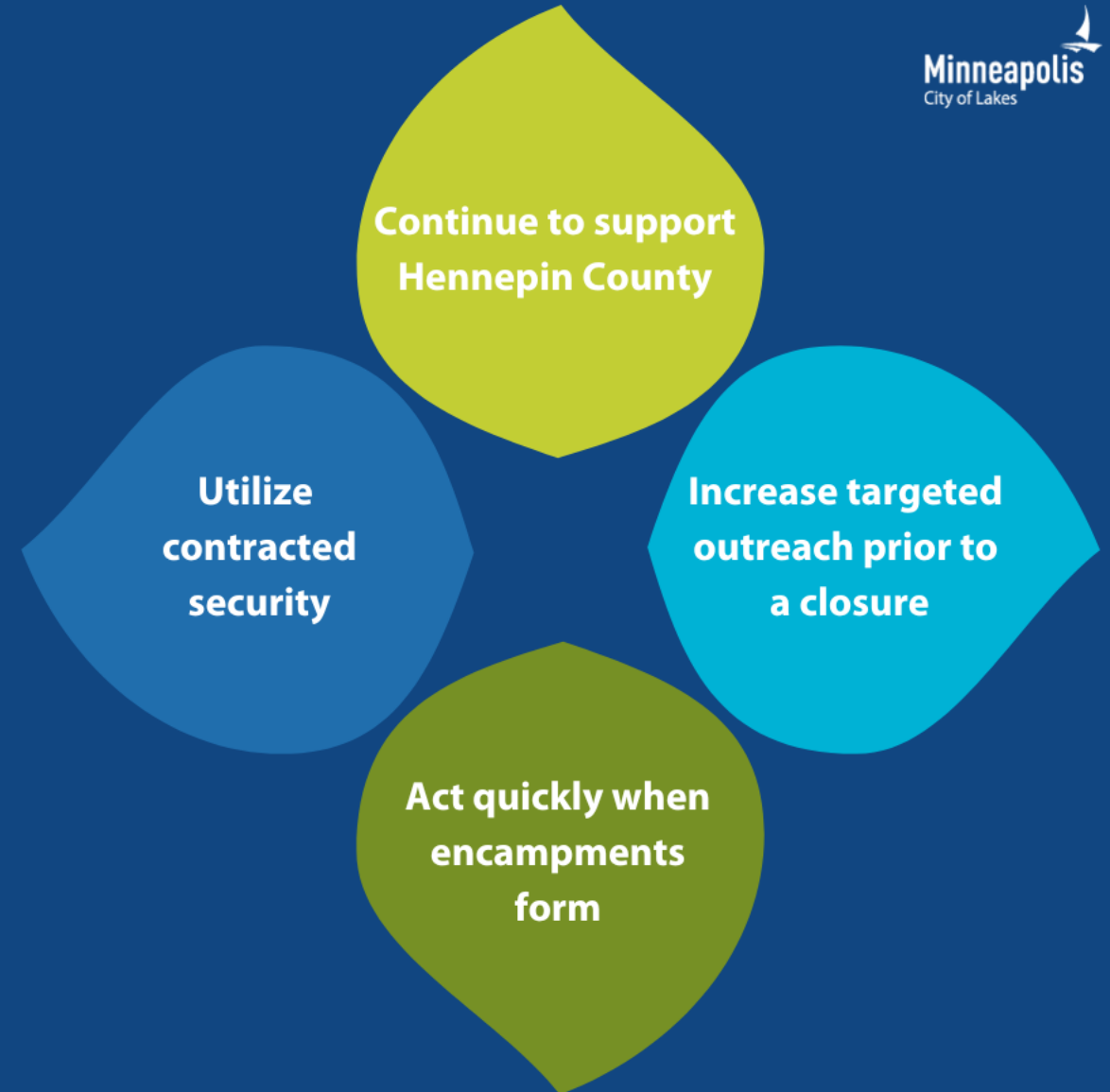
Do not criminalize people for being homeless

Stop perpetuating generational harm

Identify phase two issues to address for this health crisis

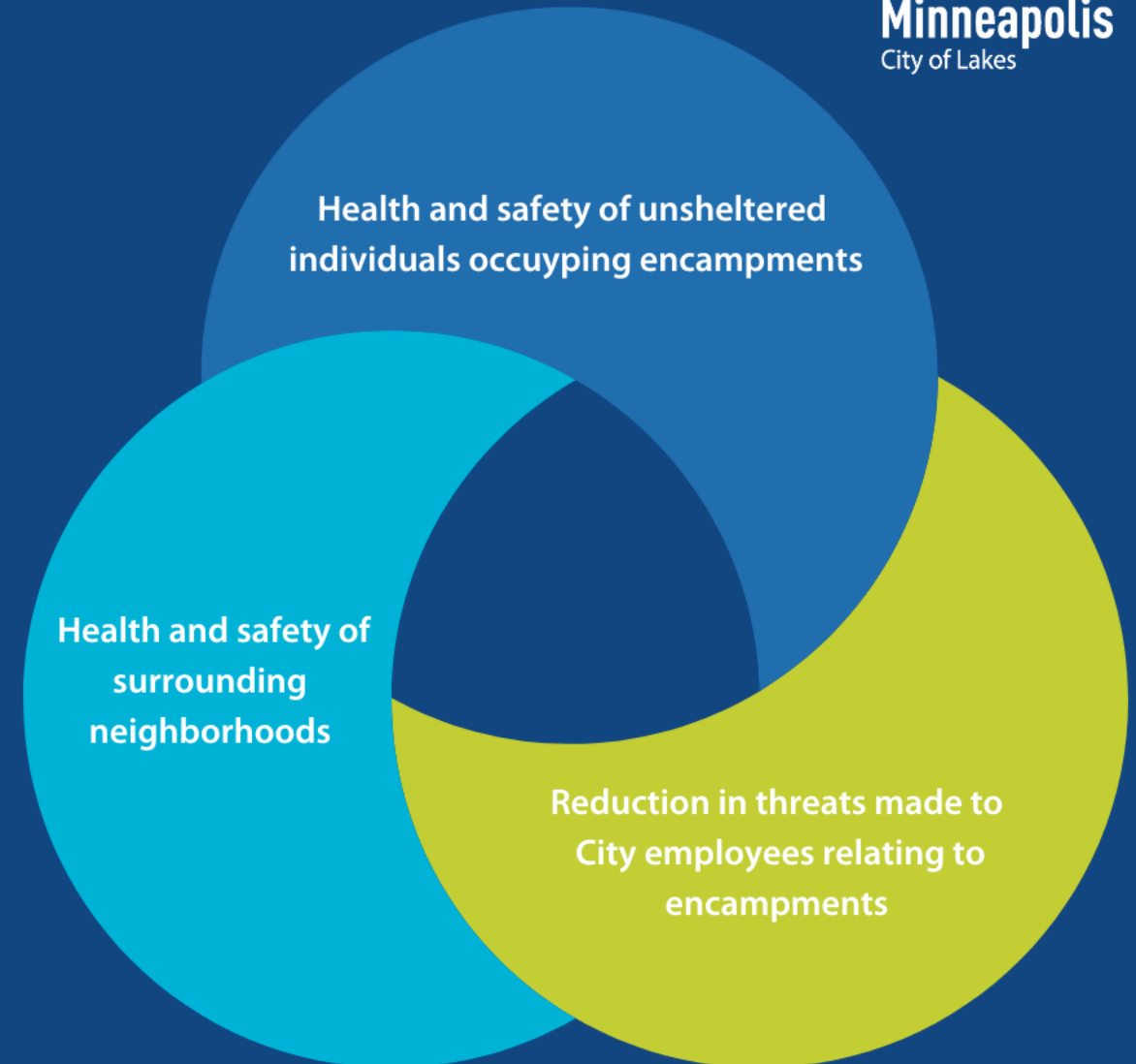
Program and Practices Recommendations

- Program recommendations to further encampment support
 - Behavioral Crisis Response Team
 - Partner with the Office of Community Safety
 - Launch Minneapolis Hope 1



Enforcement Recommendations

- All involved parties support non or minimal enforcement presence during encampment closures.
- This recommendation requires collaboration from all areas to ensure the health and safety of all involved.



Next Steps

- The City recognizes there is no easy or unilateral response to supporting unsheltered individuals occupying encampments.
- Ensuring the health and safety of all Minneapolis residents, sheltered and unsheltered, takes collaboration and partnership from all stakeholders.

Supporting
unsheltered individuals by
providing dignified resources
and assistance

Partnership to grow our
community through inclusion
and improved relations
between peace officers
and the community

Collaboration between all
involved parties will strengthen
community bonds and support
for public health and safety
needs for all residents

Appendix



Community Requests for Help

- The following content detail a sampling of 311 calls made by Minneapolis residents asking for the City to help in response to neighborhood encampments.

August 5, 2022 - Near North

There is a homeless person that is sleeping in the slide of the playground. Over 3 days there has been 3 different people on the school property that have set up residence.

We have noticed a white van parked at 1th and Bryant that I believe the people may be coming and going from.

A police officer told the occupant of the slide that they needed to take their tent down and they did but returned the following morning.

The children in the school have not be able to play at the playground due to the presence of these individuals, their drug paraphernalia and human feces.

August 9, 2022 - Whittier

Black Ford Explorer with no plates. There is trash all around it and people hang around it and party.

They have now started to move into the empty lot nearby at 2810 and 2812 1st Ave S and they are setting up tents, fighting, partying.

They are also defecating on the property.

311 Stats

- **1,785** calls made to 311 from January 3, 2022 to March 7, 2023 reporting complaints from Minneapolis residents about encampments.
- Call volume helps City make an objective assessment on community impact.

August 15, 2022 - Seward

Right under the I 94 bridge - huge encampment with tents, etc.
Caller is from daycare center and it's super unsafe for the kids at the center. They are finding all sorts of needles, people coming up to their building.
They are afraid for their their safety and the kids.

August 19, 2022 - Central

NW and SW corner of this intersection. Ongoing encampment and ongoing issues.
Three tents. 10 homeless people. Lots of bikes and trash.
Mostly underneath the bridge here.

Two days ago they tried to break into customer's neighbor's house.
Last night customer and customer's neighbor both had their car door handles destroyed from homeless people trying to break into the cars.

Customer is very frustrated by the lack of action by City of Minneapolis leadership.

This encampment is a safety concern for the neighborhood and crime related to the encampment is getting out of control.

Actual 311 Complaint



January 31, 2022 - Midtown Phillips neighborhood

We are daily witnessing people from the camp littering clothes, needles, and trash throughout our street and yards. We have watched drug deals occur in broad daylight. We have witnessed people living in the encampment removing plates from stolen cars on two separate occasions. A neighbor's garage door was crashed into by the man we believe to be the person supplying drugs to the encampment.

The garage will need to be completely reconstructed because of the damage. Last night (1/30/2022) a person from the encampment crashed a stolen vehicle into another neighbor's garage, completely destroying their garage door. Thankfully this time, 3 cop cars responded immediately and made an arrest.

My kids are scared to go into the front yard for fear of seeing someone acting strangely while they are high. They have also not been allowed to play in the yard for weeks now because of safety concerns. We have to clear needles away from our van before our kids get in. We have to clear away human refuse in our alley driveways. We can see urine marks in the snow, near the fence, showing very clearly where campers are going to the bathroom.

On several occasions we have heard loud fighting and gunshots from within the camp. We have watched the campers haul in propane tanks to keep warm in their tents. There has already been a tent fire, and breathing in the gas can be deadly. The encampment is dangerously housing many people in a small space. There are over 10 tents in the encampment and from what we can tell, each tent houses 2-3 people on average. All of the tents are located on a very small half lot owned by the city. These crowded conditions lend towards spread of disease, fires, and potentially death. The encampment also attracts outside people who sell drugs and work prostitution rings. These people are hanging out on our street in addition to the campers. Their presence is threatening.

We know the situation is complex but humbly offer some potential solutions hereafter:

We ask that the city maintain their property in the same way they expect us citizens to maintain our property. If the city is going to allow encampments on their land, then they need to provide basic common sense accommodations (sharps containers, bathrooms, trash bins, etc.) and safety regulations for the people they are housing. This includes providing a clean up crew and security around the area. Volunteers and neighbors should not be expected to shoulder these responsibilities, especially since they are not trained in addressing violence and disposing of biohazardous waste.

If residents do not agree to respect the space, then they should be evicted. The city can condemn houses because of poor living conditions, deeming them too unsafe to live. As private property owners, we have a code of conduct that is required of us in order to keep our homes or we face consequences. We would appreciate it if the city held itself to the same standard for their properties.

The encampments should be restricted to predetermined, well-maintained, designated areas, AWAY from residential neighborhoods. The city should work effectively with local nonprofits to funnel those experiencing homelessness into the resources available through nonprofits. The issue isn't necessarily a lack of resources for many in the encampment - the issue is unchecked tolerance and the city's inability to effectively maintain encampments and provide appropriate regulations when necessary.

Provide an effective and responsive communication line to enable communities to report violence/crime/biohazardous threats associated with encampments AND ensure there is a competent and trained response team available to respond to reported situations.

2901 Blaisdell, 2901 Nicollet Encampment Complaint

This morning, I was notified by our Whittier Clinic leadership of the following related to the city block that contains the clinic and parking lot:

- There continues to be discarded needles on the green space (City space) on the periphery.
- This weekend , they were at an all-time high.
 - Security will put a sharps container in the area so that our neighbors can dispose of the needles safely.
- Someone tried to get into the building through the downstairs garage door at 3:45 this morning.
 - Of course we cannot prove that the person caught on camera lives in the encampment but our cameras picked him up coming from that direction , shirtless and with a blanket over his shoulders.
 - Access to the garage allows easy access to the rest of the building and many areas that are not secured.
- Occupants of the encampment asking patients to fill water bottles from inside the clinic for their use. We have had to close Nicollet Street access doors so that Security can monitor entry into the building.
 - Our employees are distressed and continue to report an increasing sense of unease making their way to and from the building.
 - The leadership at the clinic continues to be worried about employee and patient safety and want to be preemptive to avoid any events.

Homeless Response Team

- A holistic approach that supports the complexity of addressing encampments in the city.
- HRT coordinated response:
 - HRT responds to every unsheltered homeless encampment in the city and shares that information with Hennepin County, contracted service providers and community partners.
 - Site visits provide early identification and assessments of encampments and allows the HRT to serve as a bridge to all county, service, and community partners.
 - These coordinated response efforts ensure the safety of the individuals and the community.
 - Weekly site visits provide a critical role in getting real time information to Hennepin County, contracted service providers and community partners so that they can provide outreach, offer their services and provide additional support.
 - Because the HRT and City of Minneapolis do not provide direct social services, the HRT connects and supports unsheltered individuals
 - Assisted an unsheltered individual get into shelter who later tested positive for COVID-19.
 - The individual was able to get the treatment they needed while in shelter and is currently on waiting list for permanent housing.
 - Assisted an unsheltered individual who had not eaten in days and couldn't physically get up from their sleeping bag.
 - The relationship they had with the individual allowed them to help get them to the hospital via ambulance while the team packed and stored their belongings.