Red Deer & District Chamber of Commerce
Task Force on Homelessness
What We Heard Interim Report
January 2024

LETTER FROM THE CHAIR

For almost 40 years, I have been proud to call Red Deer home. And as an invested Red Deerian, I am honoured to Chair the Red Deer & District Chamber of Commerce's Task Force on Homelessness as we seek to understand the homelessness situation in Red Deer and identify areas where the business community can help address the issue and affect measurable change.

The Task Force's key competencies centre on over 100 years of collective experience operating, owning, managing, and building successful businesses that rely on effective and efficient systems for success and the achievement of outcomes. While we are not social services experts, we are Red Deerians willing to learn and listen from experts and then offer recommendations based on the data we collect through this process and the business experience we have garnered over our careers.

No one is immune from the effects of homelessness in our community. It affects us all and will take all members of our community working together to make positive changes.

At the beginning of the Task Force's journey, the scope and breadth of this issue was overwhelming. We truly *didn't know what we didn't know*." Our knowledge and understanding grew through each conversation, community tour, piece of data, or shared experience. We are pleased to share this interim report outlining what we heard during our research phase.

We are incredibly thankful for the opportunity to learn from individuals in the provincial and municipal governments and social sector working, volunteering, or supporting the most vulnerable in our community. Red Deer has amazing people who are doing great work while facing an uphill battle of increasing complexities.

Lyn Radford
Chair

TASK FORCE MEMBERS

The Task Force in a volunteer committee consisting of business owners and leaders in the Red Deer business sector.

Task Force members are:
Lyn Radford, Chair
Kathy Lacey, Vice Chair
Erin Forbes
Mary Anne Jablonski
Martin Thomsen
Rob Warrender
John Young

The Task Force is supported by Scott Robinson and Darcy Mykytyshyn.

INTRODUCTION
A CASE FOR ACTION

During the City of Red Deer's 2022 Point in Time Homeless count,[1] 334 individuals were identified as experiencing homelessness, more than double the 144 individuals identified as experiencing homelessness in 2018.

Homelessness has a ripple effect throughout the community. Not only are the hundreds of Red Deerians experiencing homelessness not being adequately supported in our community, but homelessness impacts health and social services resources, crime and safety, and the reputation and economic viability of Red Deer.

Recognizing the growing impacts of homelessness throughout Red Deer, the Red Deer & District Chamber of Commerce (the Chamber) formed a volunteer Task Force of business leaders to understand the homelessness situation in Red Deer better and identify specific areas where the business community can actively contribute to addressing the issue and advocate for meaningful change.

This interim report outlines the Task Force's understanding of the homelessness situation in Red Deer and summarizes what the Task Force learned during the research phase.

In the spring of 2024, the Task Force will deliver a final report using these findings to create a set of actionable recommendations for the community to consider.

GUIDING PRINCIPLES

The following principles guide the Task Force's work:

- Healthy conflict - respectfully communicating different needs, values, or viewpoints while valuing diverse beliefs, perceptions, and opinions to allow the best ideas to emerge;
- Collaboration - working together to achieve a goal that one party cannot achieve on its own;
- Evidence-based - making decisions based on sound data collection and analysis;
- Social innovation - looking beyond existing solutions and encouraging new approaches to service delivery;
- Inclusion, diversity, and equity - understanding, accepting, and valuing the diversity within the community while promoting fair and impartial outcomes.

The Chamber does not view its role in this process as solving this issue, nor does it see its role as taking away from the essential efforts of the many organizations working to help homeless people in our community.

A key role the Chamber sees, once the Task Force's final report is submitted, is to advocate to responsible levels of government on the recommendations submitted as part of the final report and, where appropriate, take either a leadership role or partnership role in building and delivering initiatives that have a direct benefit to Chamber members.

WHAT IS HOMELESSNESS?

According to the Canadian Definition of Homelessness:[2]
Homelessness describes the situation of an individual, family or community without stable, permanent, appropriate housing, or the immediate prospect, means, and ability of acquiring it. It is the result of systemic or societal barriers, a lack of affordable and appropriate housing, the individual/household's financial, mental, cognitive, behavioural or physical challenges, and/or racism and discrimination. Most people do not choose to be homeless, and the experience is generally negative, unpleasant, unhealthy, unsafe, stressful and distressing.

Homelessness describes a range of housing and shelter circumstances, with people being without any shelter at one end, and being insecurely housed at the other.

THE HOUSING CONTINUUM — *Source: Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation[7]*

HOMELESS | EMERGENCY SHELTERS | TRANSITIONAL HOUSING | SOCIAL HOUSING | AFFORDABLE RENTAL HOUSING | AFFORDABLE HOME OWNERSHIP | MARKET RENTAL HOUSING | MARKET HOME OWNERSHIP

People experiencing homelessness across Canada are on the rise. In 2021, over one in ten (11.2%) Canadians or 1,690,000 people[3] reported that they had ever experienced some form of homelessness in their lifetime.

We have an obligation to address homelessness. In 1948, Canada was a signatory of the United Nations Universal Declaration of Human Rights, which articulates in Article 25,[4] *"Everyone has the right to a standard of living adequate for the health and well-being of himself and of his family, including food, clothing, housing and medical care and necessary social services, and the right to security in the event of unemployment, sickness, disability, widowhood, old age or other lack of livelihood in circumstances beyond his control."* In a country like Canada, a province like Alberta, and a city like Red Deer - everyone should have access to a home!

2022 POINT IN TIME HOMELESSNESS COUNT

In 2022, the seven Albertan cities listed below coordinated point in time homelessness counts[5] to create an understanding of homelessness across the province. While the cities coordinated their efforts, unique community trails and approaches impact the ability to make direct comparisons between the cities and results. Below, the number of individuals identified as experiencing homelessness and the city's population are listed.

Calgary	Edmonton	Grande Prairie	Lethbridge	Medicine Hat	Red Deer	Wood Buffalo
2,782	2,519	328	454	70	334	162
Population: 1,413,8000	Population: 1,087,803	Population: 67,699	Population: 104,254	Population: 65,949	Population: 105,883	Population: 74,532

Source: Homeless Hub Community Profiles[6]

HOMELESSNESS IN RED DEER

The total number of people counted as experiencing homelessness in Red Deer in 2022 was 334, which is a 132% increase from the count in 2018 where 144 individuals were identified as experiencing homelessness in Red Deer.[8] These are the people we KNOW about. It is generally accepted that for every person experiencing homelessness that we know about, there are 10 people we don't know about, either experiencing some form of homelessness today or on the brink of experiencing it. These are the Hidden Homeless.

The COVID-19 pandemic, substance abuse, global inflation, mental health, domestic abuse, and a lack of affordable housing are contributing factors to the increase of individuals experiencing homelessness in Red Deer and across Canada.

THE ROLE OF THE CITY

The City of Red Deer has adopted the role of serving as our Community Based Organization (CBO) whose mandate is to administer, monitor and evaluate grant funding on behalf of the provincial and federal governments for affordable housing and homelessness.[9] We found two predominant models for CBOs, municipal governments or not-for-profit organizations.

As part of its work, The City has had community plans in place to end homelessness since 2009. The most recent five-year strategy - *Community Housing & Homelessness Integrated Plan (CHHIP)*[10] - was launched in 2019. The Plan reflects on where the community has been, what the current situation looks like, and projects future needs.

HOUSING FIRST MODEL

Red Deer uses a Housing First[11] approach, which views housing as the foundation for life improvement and enables access to permanent housing without prerequisites or conditions beyond those of a typical renter. Housing First is a person-centred, evidence-based approach to supporting homeless people who have high needs and histories of entrenched or repeat homelessness, and especially rough sleeping, to live in their own homes.

The City of Red Deer's primary activity is to oversee a coordinated access process,[12] which matches individuals experiencing homelessness to a Housing First program that meets their needs.

RED DEER 2022 POINT IN TIME HOMELESSNESS COUNT

334 individuals identified as experiencing homelessness in Red Deer in 2022.

72 % were chronically homeless

Source: City of Red Deer's 2022 Point in Time Homeless Count Report[13]
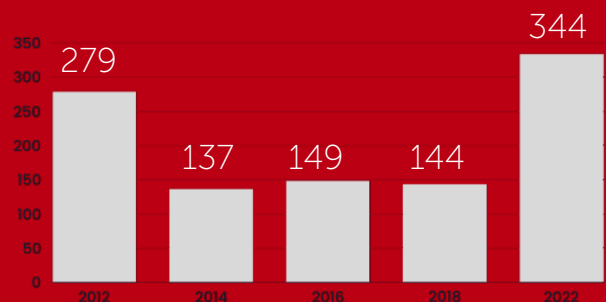
Number of people identified as experiencing homelessness in Red Deer (2012-2022)

279 (2012) 137 (2014) 149 (2016) 144 (2018) 344 (2022)

WHAT WE DID

Our research methodology centred around a "practices" approach - identifying and understanding best practices, and otherwise, that Red Deer and other communities are using to address homelessness.

Throughout the summer and fall of 2023, the Task Force conducted an environmental scan, one-on-one targeted interviews, and community conversations with Red Deerians involved in the social services sector, business owners, and government representatives at the municipal and provincial levels to build a stronger understanding of homelessness in the community.

3 community tours
1. Red Deer
2. Edmonton
3. Calgary

Visited 17 agencies and facilities providing supports for individuals experiencing homelessness in 3 Alberta communities.

Environmental scan
Reviewed studies, municipal approaches, and news articles regarding best practices in addressing homelessness in Alberta and across North America.

12 targeted interviews
Connected with government officials, social sector agencies, and community members who are experienced in the social services or connected to homelessness initiatives.

2 community conversations, 47 participants
1. Social Agencies
2. Chamber Members

Hosted two community conversations to learn and hear from the social sector and Chamber Members on their perspectives and experiences regarding homelessness in Red Deer. 47 individuals participated in these conversations.

WHAT WE HEARD

As the Task Force began the journey of understanding homelessness in our community, the incredible scope and complexity of the issue quickly became evident. With each conversation, piece of data, or shared experience, the Task Force's knowledge and understanding of homelessness in Red Deer increased, and common patterns and themes emerged.

Early in our work, we were invited by the Red Deer Housing and Homelessness Team to join their tour of nine different agencies that provide support for those experiencing homelessness in Red Deer. This tour highlighted the complexity of homelessness and brought attention to one of our key learnings - Red Deer has amazing people doing good work in an inefficient system.

Guided by our mandate to: *"Review the current situation of Homelessness in Red Deer with an eye to providing recommendations for addressing the issues identified, with an emphasis on what the business community can affect,"* the Task Force centred our work on:
- Bringing a business lens to a social challenge
- Leveraging our experiences working within systems to offer suggestions for strengthening the homelessness system in Red Deer.
- Raising awareness within the business community of the collective importance addressing homelessness has for everyone in our community.

> Red Deer has amazing people doing good work in an inefficient system.

NO SINGLE SOLUTION

One of the pivotal lessons we learned is that different communities have different needs, which is why there is no "one size fits all" approach to addressing homelessness. There are so many contributing factors, each with varying degrees of impact, that providing solutions and support requires a broad set of tools tailored to the needs of those requiring support. For example, providing homelessness support to someone with addiction issues is very different than supporting someone who finds themselves homeless due to poverty, both of which are influenced by the degree of magnitude.

Identifying causes of homelessness led to the understanding that different causes have different levels of magnitude. Instead of there being one single solution to homelessness, there are multiple solutions, as represented by the following formula:

Understood causes of homelessness x degrees of magnitude = required solutions

KEY THEMES

Assessing the data and research gathered through our business lens, the Task Force has identified six key overarching themes that contribute to homelessness in Red Deer and are areas where the business community can actively contribute knowledge, experience, or resources to address the issue and advocate for meaningful change.

The overarching themes are:
1. Housing is a business and economic development issue
2. Community understanding of homelessness
3. It's hard to go home when there is no home to go to
4. Collaborative fragmentation
5. Bureaucratization of homelessness
6. Conflicting civic priorities

HOUSING IS A BUSINESS AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT ISSUE

Housing is a community and economic development issue that requires a broad base of stakeholders working together to come up with ideas and support new projects. Currently, in Red Deer, homelessness is not typically viewed through an economic development/business lens (except in the downtown); it is contextualized and treated as a social issue.

The business of homelessness

- As of 2013, homelessness cost the Canadian economy $7.05 billion annually (up from $4.5-6 billion in 2007)[14]. This includes the provision of emergency shelters and community supports and also accounts for the increased costs of emergency services (including fire, police and EMS), health care, the criminal justice system, etc. Significant research has been done that explores the cost of housing someone in jail, hospitals, or the shelter system compared to housing them in social or supportive housing – and the difference is quite shocking. In a 2005 study by Pomeroy,[15] which looked at costs in four Canadian cities:

	2005 cost per person	2023 cost per person (inflation calculator - Bank of Canada[16])
Institutional Responses (jails, hospitals, etc.)	$66,000-$120,000	$97,000-$177,000
Emergency shelters	$13,000-$42,000	$19,000-$62,000
Supportive and Transitional Housing	$13,000-$18,000	$19,000-$26,000
Affordable Housing (without supports)	$5,000-$8,000	$7,000 - $12,000

- The financial cost of homelessness is only growing, and the costs above don't take into consideration the costs absorbed by the individuals and businesses that are contending with the impacts of homelessness.[17]

- Additionally, a study involving individuals experiencing homelessness alongside mental health issues (in Vancouver, Winnipeg, Toronto, Montréal and Moncton) found that a significant amount of money is spent on average, per person ($53,144 annually).[18] This study suggests that a heavier focus on preventative measures and programming that addresses social services, housing, and mental health needs would be more cost-effective for society at large.

AVERAGE MONTHLY COST PER PERSON OF HOUSING SOMEONE WHILE HOMELESS

| $1,932 | $4,333 | $10,900 | $701 | $199.92 |
| Shelter Bed | Provincial Jail | Hospital Bed | Rental Supplement | Social Housing |

Source: Homeless Hub[28]

- The Task Force benefits from a member who was part of a similar project in Lethbridge and shared an innovative approach developed and tested by Covenant Health. Brassard House, an integrated facility, opened in 2016, serving 12 men with complex needs through a program designed to support their basic needs of food, shelter, safety, and health support.[19] After one year, Brassard House realized a reduction in the social services costs of people experiencing homelessness (shelter, ambulance, police, emergency rooms) of $22,311 per person[20] ($32,797 in 2023 dollars). After factoring in the cost of the new model, the pilot project found that based on one year of historical data, there is a $.97 return for every $1.00 spent.[21] The ratio becomes positive once the number of residents increases beyond 12. Even more promising, their modelling showed that the net savings would grow exponentially with every individual cared for. Covenant Health has developed a model that has the benefit of scale - more individuals supported equals greater cost savings.

## Red Deer needs an integrated housing strategy
- Red Deer does not have a comprehensive, integrated housing strategy that supports the supply needs of all residents.
- The lack of this housing strategy is evident; Red Deer is experiencing the impacts of a substandard housing strategy.

Good quality and affordable housing promotes economic development
- In a British research paper, *Housing and Economic Development: Moving Forward Together,[22]* Steven Douglas, Executive Chair of the Housing Corporation captures it this way: "*Housing is often viewed as a barometer for the state of the economy. The relationship between housing and economic performance, however, operates at a number of spatial levels. The importance of housing to the wellbeing and prosperity of places plays out in three ways. Firstly, the growing importance of skills to places' economic performance means that getting the right housing offer, including affordable housing, is essential to attracting and retaining a skills base that will encourage inward investment. Secondly, aligning strategies for housing and economic development will increase the likelihood that efforts to address deprivation will be supported*

by measures to address the underlying economic causes of area deprivation. Co-ordinating regeneration and economic development interventions maximises the potential for achieving a virtuous circle that can deliver greater economic inclusion. Finally, housing investment in itself can be a powerful driver of local economic activity."

- Substandard housing can significantly impact a community's economic development and lead to lower property values, which reduces the amount of revenue generated through property taxes[23]. Businesses in the downtown can attest to this, but the more insidious impact on revenues comes with the long-term reputation risk created by a failure to provide housing or create an environment that encourages the private sector to participate.
- It can also lead to a range of negative outcomes, including poor health,[24] lower educational attainment, and reduced economic opportunities. People living in poor housing conditions may be more likely to suffer from respiratory illnesses, which can lead to increased absenteeism and reduced productivity.[25]
- *Housing and Economic Development: Moving Forward Together* by Catherine Glossop outlines the direct impact the housing market has on a city's economy, specifically identifying three ways housing impacts economic growth: labour markets, infrastructure, and business:[26]
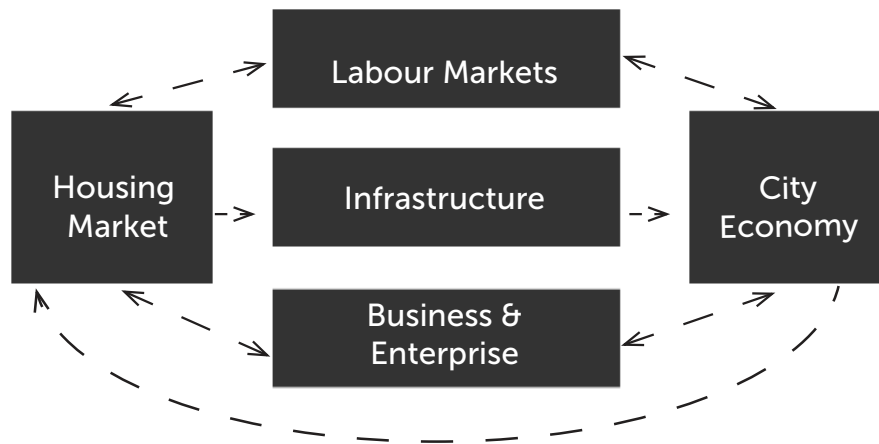
Theme summary

The cost of how we address homelessness is immense, and in being so, it draws resources away from other challenges that could be served if we explored new ways of supporting those experiencing homelessness.

Downtown businesses are bearing the high costs of the issues that cause homelessness; however, every business in Red Deer is bearing the economic development impacts of homelessness in our community. All businesses experience decreasing property values (relatively speaking), mental health issues for employees, absenteeism, reduced productivity and the list goes on. There is a role for Red Deer's business community to play in addressing our homelessness challenges.

COMMUNITY UNDERSTANDING OF HOMELESSNESS

"Homelessness is like a river, you fall into it, you drift, and it is hard to get out. You end up not feeling like you do not belong anywhere, that no one cares about you." – Morris Flewwelling, Former Mayor of Red Deer

We need a shared understanding of homelessness

- Homelessness encompasses a range of physical living situations. It is more than unsheltered individuals, it includes those who may be couch surfing, subject to domestic abuse, or one paycheque away from eviction.
- Without a shared understanding of homelessness, the community lacks a unified approach to addressing the issue, leading to reduced responsibility and the potential for NIMBY-ism (Not In My Backyard) sentiments.
- The challenges in downtown Red Deer are mainly attributed to addiction and/or mental health challenges, leading to homelessness.
- Addressing the NIMBY-ism barrier in the community is crucial for the productive confrontation of facts and finding meaningful solutions to homelessness.

> A lack of understanding breeds reduced trust, responsibly, and narrow solutions.

Homelessness is a spectrum, cycle AND symptom:

- Like most others in the community, our initial perspective was shaped by: What was most prevalent, what was most visual, what was most vocal. Homelessness is much more than any of us see.
- Red Deer doesn't have a homelessness problem, it has an:
  - ADDICTIONS problem,
  - MENTAL HEALTH problem,
  - TRAUMA problem,
  - DOMESTIC VIOLENCE problem,
  - AFFORDABILITY problem,
  - RACISM problem.

  These are all the factors that LEAD to homelessness. No one wakes up and decides they want to be homeless. Homelessness happens, and as a community, we can choose to be there to address it, or not.

Learnings from the Lived Experience Council

The Lived Experience Council, a group of individuals brought together by Canadian Mental Health who have experienced homelessness, shared with the Task Force the details of a report they commissioned, in partnership with the Downtown Business Association, entitled *Strategies to Combat Social Issues*. The report notes that:[27]

- many people enter homelessness as youth and struggle to get out;
- people are scared to reach out because of the stigma of homelessness, so that is where they stay;
- homeless people don't want to be around other homeless people, particularly in shelters, because they don't feel safe; and
- generally, those experiencing homelessness don't have the skills required to pull themselves out of homelessness.

Theme summary

Housing equals safety! Consider the simplicity of that statement and how it applies to your everyday life. Individuals experiencing homelessness are just like you - they have families, they have hopes, they have goals, and they want to feel safe. It's important to step back and consider the impact on one's mental health when they don't have the safety of a home.

TERMINOLOGY: HOMELESSNESS OR UNHOUSED?

Homeless or homelessness has been the standard term used by governments to describe people living without stable or permanent shelter. However, in recent years the term unhoused has gained popularity.[29]

Using unhoused acknowledges that the root cause of the problem is a lack of affordable housing regardless of the factors contributing to it.[30]

Throughout this report, the term homelessness is primarily used but the reader may choose to use the terms interchangeably.

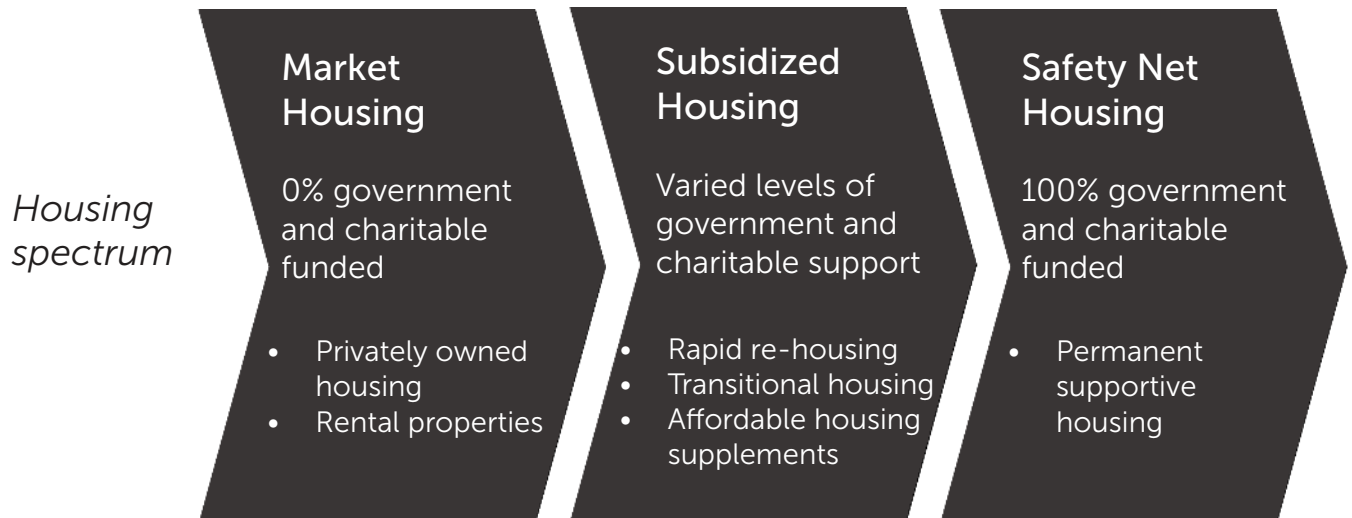# IT'S HARD TO GO HOME WHEN THERE IS NO HOME TO GO TO

The most common item that everyone consulted during the research phase agreed upon is that Red Deer lacks the necessary inventory to provide a space for all the unhoused (or soon-to-be unhoused). The housing needs of a community are inter-dependent upon each other, and the greatest barrier we experience in Red Deer is a lack of inventory, appropriately placed in the housing spectrum, to support those in need.

Shelters are not homes

- An ongoing debate in Red Deer surrounds the potential site of a permanent homeless shelter. Shelters are not homes. A shelter is an entry point to housing. Your stay should be brief and a means to connect you to more permanent housing.
- Our conversations, debate, and related antagonism are disproportionately focused on a short-term housing solution instead of channelling that energy towards long-term, sustainable outcomes.

> The goal of shelters should be focused on being <u>empty</u> because everyone has a home.

Red Deer needs more housing

Housing spectrum

Market Housing	Subsidized Housing	Safety Net Housing
0% government and charitable funded	Varied levels of government and charitable support	100% government and charitable funded
• Privately owned housing • Rental properties	• Rapid re-housing • Transitional housing • Affordable housing supplements	• Permanent supportive housing

- A chronic lack of housing is afflicting every major center in Alberta.[31]
- Market housing plays a crucial role in supporting the housing needs of our community; however, it can't play an exclusive role in meeting the supply requirements of demand.
- Varied housing solutions are needed to meet the varied factors that contribute to homelessness.
- Non-market forces are making the cost of building inventory uneconomical.
- Substandard housing promotes homelessness.[32]

Individuals and families experiencing financial hardship are at risk of losing their homes and moving into a state of homelessness

- Homelessness has a cascading element to it. For example, if someone is housed, and living paycheck to paycheck, a simple rent increase could move them into an unhoused state.
- If there is no housing support from the Subsidized Housing stream, they are at risk of moving into the Safety Net Housing category of the spectrum, which is currently under-supplied.

The acuity of demand for housing in Red Deer exists primarily within what we are defining as Subsidized and Safety Net Housing

- Red Deer needs more Permanent Supportive Housing (Safety Net Housing). We have about 50% of the inventory that is required at the current time.
- In the last 25 years, two new affordable housing buildings have been constructed in Red Deer. The City's population has grown by 68% over that period.[33]

> Red Deer's Vacancy Rate has gone from an average of 10% a few years ago to just over 2% today.[41]

SUBSIDIZED HOUSING

- Within Red Deer, the Red Deer Housing Authority[34] and Bridges Community Living[35] are the primary providers of subsidized housing, which is funded through municipal, provincial, and federal programs.

- Bridges Community Living reports that there are approximately 10,000 seniors in Red Deer. Approximately 3,000 seniors qualify for support, while 600 is what Bridges has capacity to provide.[37]

- Red Deer Housing Authority properties provide 310 units, which are close to 100% occupied, and the Rental Assistance Benefit supports approximately 700 families. The waitlist for support, as of December 31, 2023, is approximately 400 names long.[39]

SAFETY NET HOUSING

- Red Deer currently has a capacity for 230 individuals in the emergency shelter system and 62 people in permanent supportive housing.[36]

- There is an ongoing debate about selecting a location for the permanent homeless shelter;[38] however, as we cast an eye to the future with an aging population, we will have more and more senior citizens seeking the services of a shelter if we can't provide them with a home.

- Chronic lack of permanent supportive housing inventory in our city. Between November 2023 and January 2024, there was an average of 129 individuals eligible, and waiting, for permanent supportive housing.[40]

Theme summary

Market-based housing has been the community's primary mechanism for ensuring everyone is housed. Today, we are in the epicentre of a perfect storm characterized by low vacancy, high construction costs, increasing rent, and limited support for affordable housing. We have people on the street because they have nowhere else to go.

COLLABORATIVE FRAGMENTATION

There are hundreds of well-meaning, well-intended, hard-working individuals doing what they believe is going to achieve better outcomes for those facing homelessness, and from what we could see, the parties are trying to collaborate and work together as best they can. A barrier that we sense exists is a lack of strategic leadership that brings everyone together, facilitates collective decision-making, and aligns resources towards achieving strategic outcomes.

There is little alignment between the three levels of government

- The municipal, provincial, and federal governments need to get better at listening to each other and finding ways to collaborate in a way that puts those experiencing homelessness and those experiencing the aftermath of homelessness at the centre of their conversations.
- It is very evident how each level of government has a perspective on this issue and is doing what they believe is best to address the challenges. There doesn't seem to be a desire for inter-governmental conversation and action to address this challenge.
- Shovel-ready projects are a misnomer. Funding organizations like the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), the Government of Canada, and the Government of Alberta prioritize shovel-ready projects. Housing authorities face challenges as they invest significant time and money in making projects shovel-ready, only to learn their shovel-ready projects won't meet unique, changing, and last-minute eligibility requirements, leading to frustration, wasted capital expenditures, and hindrance in addressing community housing needs. The inter-governmental dynamics create a tug-of-war, resulting in land being secured but undeveloped, wasted investments in plans, growing waiting lists, and public criticism of the housing authorities.
- The more we listened, the more confused we became about *"How CMHC, or Ottawa, or the province, knows better (through their funding criteria) than Red Deer about what we need."*
- There is a collective sense that the voices of the people supporting our homeless are not being heard. Instead, they are being told what the solution is.

> *"When it comes to housing and homelessness, the feds have the money, the province has the jurisdiction, and the cities have the problem. So, we all need to be at the table at the same time." – Halifax Mayor Mike Savage*

There is a lack of awareness of the City of Red Deer's community plan to end homelessness

- While Red Deer has had a plan to end homelessness since 2009, many people and organizations supporting homelessness in Red Deer are unaware that these community plans exist.
- Since 2009,[42] the City has been working to support the community's most vulnerable and has accomplished many terrific things. Without the efforts of the City, our community would be facing even more challenging circumstances. Their efforts need to be amplified and shared across the community.

> The City of Red Deer has had a community plan to end homelessness in place since 2009.

Competition for resources

- While the City of Red Deer is the conduit for a number of strategies and funding around homelessness initiatives, agencies can access funding for homelessness initiatives without connection to the City's community plan to end homelessness.
- Agencies can obtain funding based on their individual mandate, separate from the City's Plan on Housing and Homelessness.
- As a business-centered organization, the Chamber of Commerce believes in competition, except when it is at the expense of community-driven outcomes.

Strong service collaboration, little strategic collaboration

- There are a number of stakeholders working to serve the homeless in Red Deer, and many agencies are doing similar work.
- The City has done an admirable job of bringing together and facilitating collaboration between agencies at an operational level, such as through the coordinated access program[43].
- There is little evidence of collaboration at a strategic level. Most agencies are too small and need to focus on front-line services, which leaves little to no time to resource strategic community outcomes that would have a meaningful impact.

Growing fragmentation between businesses and agencies

- Many of our conversations centred around the fragmentation between levels of government; however, there is a significant and growing fragmentation between the for-profit and not-for-profit business communities, particularly in Red Deer's downtown. On one hand, there is a sense that for-profit businesses have a stronger role to play in addressing social challenges, such as homelessness. On the other, there is a reciprocal sense among the for-profit business community that they are being held to different and higher standards regarding their operations, activity outside their businesses, and their need to accept behaviours that would not be tolerated if conducted by a for-profit business. For example, if a restaurant or bar is serving clients who are being disruptive and causing damage to neighbouring establishments, there would be an expectation that the connected business would address the challenges promptly and meaningfully. There is a perception of a double standard in what is expected of downtown businesses.
- One of the "best practice" takeaways the Task Force saw in Calgary's East Village was something called the "Good Neighbour" policy, which has agencies working to foster a positive, professional, and collaborative relationship with their for-profit business neighbours. The Task Force was struck by the fact that shelters and businesses existed in the same ecosystem, with one comment being, "If I didn't know any better, I would have never guessed that there is a homeless shelter across the street from Stampede Park." The curb appeal, cleanliness, and collaboration in dealing with petty crime have created a tremendous amount of social currency with for-profit business leaders and are fostering an environment that can accommodate the diverse needs of the neighbourhood. Not-for-profit leaders see their for-profit colleagues as peers, and therefore work hard to build collegial, professional, and respective relationships in how they operate their organizations.

What gets measured gets done
- We were thrilled to see Homelessness Key Performance Indicators[44] in the current five-year plan and applaud the City and its partners for the accomplishments that have been attained.
- What we could not find was a record of the accomplishments achieved in attaining the key priorities of the integrated plan, such as: "Wraparound Services," "Truth and Reconciliation," "Housing Options," "Early Intervention and Coordination," "Communication and Leadership." The plan also identifies a series of targets that we could not readily assess the accomplishment of.
- As the Task Force reviewed the plan and the measures to achieve them, it wondered:
  - Is the achievement of outcomes spread evenly across our agency community or concentrated in a small number of organizations?
  - Is homelessness support spread too thin and are there opportunities to concentrate efforts to more efficiently, effectively, and strategically achieve outcomes?
  - Are the right measures being used to drive performance and desired outcomes?

Community champion accountable for delivery
- While it seems implicit, we could not identify who is explicitly responsible for the strategic leadership that brings everyone together, facilitates collective decision-making, and aligns resources toward achieving strategic outcomes.
- In the absence of a community champion, who is accountable for outcomes?

Theme summary
There is a common sentiment in our community that serves as the elephant in the room, and that is the question of whether there are too many parties, pursuing too many agendas, creating too much inertia, that more and more of the people requiring support are getting left behind. It's a question with a great deal of perspective and emotion. There is collaboration, no doubt. We wonder, *"What could be accomplished if the collaborative efforts were multiplied exponentially?"*

BUREAUCRATIZATION OF HOMELESSNESS

Homelessness, once managed by volunteers and non-governmental entities, has evolved into a growing bureaucracy requiring government oversight, integrated partnerships, and specialized resources. The causes of homelessness are multifaceted, demanding a coordinated approach that balances business practices, creativity, and adaptability to meet the needs of homeless individuals effectively.

Bureaucracies are important because they provide a structured and organized way to manage large organizations and ensure that tasks are completed efficiently and effectively. Key characteristics of successful bureaucracies - clear chains of command, clear division of labour, clear rules and procedures - are of benefit; however, a significant barrier in addressing homelessness is that sometimes, well-designed hierarchy has become too rigid and too centralized. There needs to be a recalibration.

As we engaged with the different organizations addressing homelessness, it became apparent that there are multiple, small and large players, identifying a role to play:

RED DEER	ALBERTA	CANADA
• Community Housing and Homelessness Integrated Plan • Downtown Business Association • Red Deer Housing Authority • Bridges Community Living	• Children and Family Services • Health • Infrastructure • Mental Health and Addictions • Seniors, Community and Social Services • Alberta Social Housing Corporation	• CMHC • Department of Families, Children and Social Development • Infrastructure Canada • National Housing Strategy • RCMP • Reaching Home: Canada's Homelessness Strategy

As outlined above, each level of government has identified a multitude of roles they "want" to play (and this graphic doesn't include the dozens of agencies playing a role in homelessness across our community). As referenced earlier, governments are getting in the way of each other, and the people they want to help are getting left behind.

There are a lot of rules that govern the decisions around homelessness

- There is too much red tape. Agencies lack flexibility in their contracts to allocate resources effectively.
- Agencies like Bridges Community Living and the Red Deer Housing Authority, organizations governed by the Alberta Housing Act,[45] have to wait for decisions and resources from Edmonton before being able to perform the most basic of housing management decisions, such as capital investments to put damaged units back into circulation. The impact of these rules is that there are vacant units in our community unable to be made available until the units are repaired.

> *"If you have a reputation as a big, stiff bureaucracy, you're stuck - Jack Welch*

We decided to identify the key characteristics of successful bureaucracies and provide our insights on how these traits are being applied in a homelessness context:

Hierarchy is necessary for a clear chain of command

- At its most macro level, decisions on how to address homelessness in our community are being made using a confederate model, one characterized by weak centralized authority.
- While we do not believe in a centralized model headed by the federal or provincial governments, we believe there is value in a more centralized, community-led model. Our observation is that decision-making is so decentralized that strategic, groundbreaking, and impactful choices are not allowed to emerge.

A need for role clarity

- A benefit of bureaucracies is a clear division of labour in which every individual has a specialized job.
- Our research shows a lot of finger-pointing between levels of government over who is responsible for what.
- An existing barrier is a lack of specialization and the inappropriate application of resources in addressing specific problems. For example, the RCMP has six members solely focused on securing the downtown. The RCMP is not a security service, they are a policing service. They can be more focused on solving and preventing the crime that leads to homelessness, than managing the effects of homelessness. Are we utilizing the talent dedicated to addressing homelessness in the most efficient and effective manner possible?
- It takes talented, patient, resilient people to go to work every day and be on the front line of addressing some of the most complex social issues in our society. What stood out for us is the complexity and sophistication required to address the day-to-day challenges of working with clients. Do we have the "*right people on the bus, sitting in the right seats?*"

Rules govern behaviour

- While the Task Force understands the need for rules, there are a lot of rules that govern the decisions around homelessness, and we believe they have become barriers. There is too much red tape.
- There are rules for securing capital funding. There are rules for expending operational dollars, BUT many of the rules have been established by players no where close to the action.
- The rules that govern homelessness solutions need to be recalibrated and aligned with the achievement of strategic outcomes.

Maintenance of files or records: a system for maintaining records and files that ensures that information is easily accessible and can be used to make informed decisions

- The City of Red Deer shines in its capacity and capability for collecting data, gathering research, and sharing data amoungst its partners. Over successive five-year plans, the City has prioritized data, and the delivery of results in this regard serves as evidence of their success.
- Data is required for effective decision-making, but is the data available comprehensive for our community?

Evidence-based decision-making

- Our observations are mixed. On the one hand, the City of Red Deer is working hard and doing a good job collecting data about homelessness through the work they do with agencies. Data is required for effective decision-making.
- The Task Force struggled to understand whether the data was "community comprehensive." Are all the players in the homelessness bureaucracy contributing meaningful data to the system and are they able to access the data to fulfill their mandates?

Professionalization: expertise and are trained to perform their jobs effectively.

- As mentioned several times in this report, the Task Force can't say enough about the dedication and commitment of the individuals working across all organizations to support this issue. It takes talented, patient, resilient people to go to work every day and be on the front line of addressing some of the most complex social issues in our society.
- Early in our work, what stood out for us is the complexity and sophistication required to address the day-to-day challenges of working with clients. This work is complex, demanding, and draining. It became obvious that a great part of being unable to chart a long-term vision and focus energy on strategic outcomes is that the resources we need to complete this work have tactical responsibilities that demand their time and attention. The people working in our agencies are spread too thin — we are asking them to do it all, which is simply not sustainable.

> Are we achieving the proper ROI? Might it be less expensive to build more housing than manage homelessness the way we do today?

Theme summary

Homelessness is complicated, and supporting it requires dedication, vision, and teamwork. The questions the Task Force asked itself many times were, "*If we were building the bureaucracy to support homelessness from the beginning, would we build it differently? Does the current system SUSTAIN homelessness or STEM it?*"

CONFLICTING CIVIC PRIORITIES

As the Community Based Organization, the City of Red Deer has placed itself at the epicentre of Red Deer's homelessness circumstances. There are compelling reasons to take this approach, and, as we have seen in other jurisdictions, those municipalities serve in the same capacity; however, this involvement can create barriers, with challenges such as confusion about the City's role and becoming an easy target for action or inaction.

Since the early 1990s, after C.K Prahalad published an article in the Harvard Business Review entitled *The Core Competence of the Corporation,*[46] companies across industries and sectors have been challenging themselves to define their core competence. Core competencies are important in business because they help companies identify their unique strengths and competitive advantages. As the Task Force worked through its consultation process, this "core competencies" question kept coming up.

Governor, facilitator or administrator?
- Through our conversations with agencies, community groups, the City and business leaders, we heard that the City's role is confusing. Is the City a:
  - governor, who controls and directs the making and administration of policy related to homelessness?
  - administrator, who manages or supervises the execution, use, or conduct of policy related to homelessness?
  - facilitator, whose role is focused on helping to bring (something) about?
- The City's website[47] lists 16 services the City provides and administers. Upon review, one could naturally conclude these services are core to an urban municipality. They include transit; garbage, recycling and organics; police; roads; property assessment and taxes; utility billing; permits and inspections; parking; ambulance, fire and emergencies; environment and conservation; electric, light and power; water, wastewater and stormwater; animals and wildlife; licenses; engineering; and cemetery services.
- A question at the forefront of our work was, *"How does homelessness fit into the service proposition of the City?"*

Evidence vs emotion
- There exists a conflict between evidence-based and emotion-driven solutions in addressing homelessness, exemplified by the permanent shelter decision.
- What we've heard from the community is a heightened level of frustration with the conflict between evidence and data-based solutions being suppressed in favour of emotional and reactional options. The ongoing debate around the location of an emergency shelter serves as a natural example of this conflict's manifestation. Strong emotions are on each side of the discussion, both supported with compelling data, but the lack of decision heightens the frustration. The one thing everyone agrees upon is that everyone will not agree with the final decision, but the community needs to choose a path and move forward.

The next election
- Elections influence addressing homelessness and increase challenges of political decision-making.
- Politicians are well-intended individuals of conviction who put themselves forward to build their communities. The reality of their circumstances is that they must find the appropriate balance between evidence, emotion, and political conviction to remain in their roles. The barrier this can create is an untenable tension that incentivizes short-term decision-making, which inevitably risks perpetuating issues that might otherwise be resolved.

No single voice
- The City does not necessarily speak with a single voice. Within the City, conflicting departmental outcomes affect the City's ability to make decisions to address homelessness.
- One example, shared with us by several organizations, centred on recommendations provided to the City to remove a bench from the downtown area that had become the focal point of frequent inappropriate and offensive behaviour. It was advised, by one of the City's service providers, that the removal of the bench would remove the undesirable behaviour. However, the removal of the bench conflicted with the City's downtown beautification strategy, and the bench remains. Why do we highlight such a small and relatively insignificant decision? To those who shared the story, it represented misaligned civic priorities, a continued need to invest resources in addressing a problem that could have easily been stopped with the benches' removal, and a sense that those who provided the recommendation, based on their expert research, advice, and guidance had been ignored.

Theme summary
As we worked through this process, all levels of government have injected themselves into addressing homelessness. The two questions we advocate they ask themselves are:

    1) What value do we bring to homelessness that is not better delivered by others?
       (and focus on that)
    2) What activities would be better delivered by a different organization?

These are questions CEOs and executive teams ask themselves every day in industry. We are not critical of the people in government. The question we ask our civic leaders to answer is, "*What are the key value propositions that civic leadership offers in addressing homelessness that give it a competitive advantage over other delivery options?*"

CLOSING REMARKS
WHERE TO GO FROM HERE?

First, it is important to start by taking a moment to recognize and thank the many individuals consulted as part of this report. The goal of the Task Force in this phase of the process was to listen and learn, and we hope this document provides a clear articulation of the messages the community wanted us to hear. We would like to thank the people who sat down with us, came to forums, and presented information. While the Task Force feels they have learned an immense amount about this subject, they also know they have only scratched the surface.

You, the reader of this document, now have the opportunity to provide your feedback and insight on whether the Task Force "*got it right*." We ask you to validate this report, where we have missed the mark, clarify our understanding, and help to ensure that the forthcoming recommendations are sound, relevant, and responsible. You may share your insights by visiting reddeerchamber.com/homeless-task-force/ until February 16, 2024. We look forward to hearing from you.

Over the next two months, we will be developing recommendations that will be brought forward in early April. We welcome your insights, perspectives, and suggestions. Please share those by emailing **taskforce@reddeerchamber.com**.

Our Red Deer community has a track record of successfully addressing important community issues. The Red Deer Chamber of Commerce took on this body of work with the belief that there is an important contribution our business community can make in driving meaningful outcomes. We hope you will join us in building solutions that show our community's resilience and compassion in ways we have never seen before.

APPENDIXES

1. Task Force Members
2. Task Force Terms of Reference
3. References
4. Materials Reviewed
5. Organizations/Individuals Interviewed

APPENDIX 1 - TASK FORCE MEMBERS

TASK FORCE VOLUNTEER MEMBERS

Lyn Radford, Chair

When Lyn Radford and her husband Reg, moved their family to Red Deer in 1986 to open a business, they became invested in everything Red Deer. Nearly four decades later, their impact resonates throughout our community. Lyn has led many volunteer projects, from bolstering sports facilities to leading legacy multisport games events, advocating for social justice needs and supporting post-secondary sustainability, which have enhanced our community.

Recognized as Red Deer's Citizen of the Year, inducted into the Alberta Sports Hall of Fame, and honoured with accolades such as the Canadian Sport Tourism Association Volunteer of the Year award, Queen's Diamond and Jubilee Community Contribution Medals, and the Canadian Senate Special Recognition Medal, Lyn's contribution to our community has been vast.

Lyn's life has been devoted to seeking practical ways that we can improve life for the community as a whole. As a family, the Radfords have contributed their time and made philanthropic contributions to many organizations and projects for this city. The motto of having "skin in the game" truly describes Lyn's unwavering commitment to Red Deer.

Kathy Lacey, Vice Chair

Kathy Lacey graduated from the University of Alberta with a Bachelor of Education Degree. After teaching with the County of Red Deer for several years, she chose to leave the profession and help her husband Peter found a public company. Cervus Equipment grew to include 64 dealerships across Canada, Australia, and New Zealand.

Volunteering was part of Kathy's upbringing, and she has continued to volunteer all her life. As a founding member of the Red Deer Festival of Trees, she held a leadership role for 25 years raising more than $16 million for the Red Deer Regional Health Foundation. She served on the board of the Red Deer Regional Health Foundation from 2012 to 2018 and was named Red Deer's Citizen of the Year in 2010.

Kathy and Peter have three children and seven grandchildren who all reside in Alberta.

Erin Forbes

Erin Forbes brings a wealth of experience in the non-profit sector in Central Alberta. She is currently the Executive Director of Dress for Success Central Alberta, having previously worked as the Resource Development Manager at United Way Central Alberta and as the Fund Development, Marketing & Communications Manager for the Red Deer Hospice Society. Erin has a Bachelor of Commerce in Marketing and a postgraduate certificate in change management. She is an active member of the Red Deer & District Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors.

Prior to her work in the non-profit sector, Erin co-owned and operated a local retail business until selling it in 2021. Erin currently resides in Red Deer with her husband and two children. She is deeply invested in her community and believes in the value of partnerships and engagement.

Hon. Mary Anne Jablonski, ECA

Mary Anne Jablonski, a former MLA and Minister of Seniors and Community Supports, brings extensive experience in government and community affairs to the Task Force. Over her 15 years as MLA for Red Deer North, she served on numerous government committees, including Chairperson for the Cabinet Policy Committee on Community Services. She served as Deputy Chair of Committees and became the first female Speaker to preside over a question period in the Alberta Legislature. She is very proud of the work she was involved with, including the role she played in supporting Kentwood Place in Red Deer and the Protection of Children Abusing Drugs legislation.

Mary Anne was born and raised with three sisters and one brother in St. Catharines, Ontario. She studied psychology and political science at Brock University on scholarship. She married her husband, Bob, in 1971. They have three adult children and nine grandchildren. They moved to Alberta in 1980 when Bob was transferred to Penhold with the Canadian Armed Forces.

In the early 1980s, Mary Anne participated in a successful lobby effort in petitioning the federal government for family resource centres, for the rights of military spouses, and for dental and health benefits for families of military personnel and members of the Royal Canadian Mounted Police. Mary Anne worked in banking for seven years. She and her husband owned and operated a fibreglass manufacturing company for 20 years, and she is now the Manager for Special Projects for The Coverall Shop, an award-winning, family-owned business. As a family, they have made philanthropic contributions and contributed their time to many projects and organizations in Red Deer and Central Alberta.

Mary Anne has been the recipient of a number of awards, including the latest award, the Queen Elizabeth II's Platinum Jubilee Medal "in recognition of your valuable contribution to the province". Volunteering in the community has always been important to Mary Anne. She now serves on the Mission and Engagement Committee for Covenant Health, the Police Advisory Committee, and the Chamber's Homelessness Task Force.

Martin Thomsen

In 2022, Martin Thomsen retired after 35 years of public service. He spent 11 years as a law enforcement officer, and then another 24 years in post-secondary education and municipal government.

Martin spent seven years as an instructor in the Criminal Justice program at Lethbridge College and an additional 17 years in administration, including as Program Chair for the Criminal Justice department, Dean of Justice and Human Services at Lethbridge College, and finally General Manager, Community Social Development for the City of Lethbridge. During his tenure with the City of Lethbridge, Martin partnered with Dr. Alina Turner (world renowned social researcher) to complete extensive research on homelessness and other social issues.

After two months of restless retirement, Martin returned to the work world and is currently serving as a Dean at Red Deer Polytechnic.

Rob Warrender

A partner with Altalaw, Rob Warrender's legal practice includes corporate structuring and financing, commercial acquisitions and divestitures, commercial leasing, estate planning and residential transactions.

Rob has been actively involved in the community, having acted as President of the YMCA, Titans Rugby Football Club, and a Board Member of Alberta Special Olympics. Rob provides pro bono legal services to a number of local charities and currently acts as Treasurer of Crossroads Church and as an Advisor to the Red Deer Dream Centre.

In his spare time, Rob may be found cycling, running, skiing, or playing hockey. Rob is married and has two adult daughters and three grandchildren.

John Young

After graduating with a Bachelor of Commerce degree in Finance from the University of Calgary, John progressed into gaining experience in the oil and gas industry in Calgary before moving back to Red Deer where he developed industry expertise and began building his own private wealth management practice.

Since joining RBC Dominion Securities in 2007, John has expanded his accreditation from Investment Advisor to Wealth Manager to Chartered Investment Manager. While managing and growing his practice, he also took on the management of the office from 2013 – 2019, continuing to develop skills and knowledge unique to his role.

John has over 20 years of experience in corporate and family wealth management and has gained valuable insight uniquely tailored to this role. Through his diversified experience in capital markets and personal finance, John employs a comprehensive process where he applies this broad knowledge, understanding, and access to resources to provide you and your family with unparalleled wealth management solutions and services.

Born and raised in Red Deer, he believes in being an active member of the local community. John previously spent time on the boards of the Red Deer and District Community Foundation, Affairs of the Arts (A Red Deer College fundraiser), and the Audit and Finance Committee for the 2019 Canada Winter Games.

Outside of the office, John spends time with his wife Melissa and their children: Nikola, Chloe, and Brooks. When he can, John enjoys donating his time to community ventures, and in his leisure moments, he can likely be found on the ski hill or the golf course.

TASK FORCE SUPPORT

Scott Robinson

Chief Executive Officer of the Red Deer & District Chamber of Commerce, Scott Robinson is an experienced leader with over 25 years of executive and managerial experience. Prior to his role with the Chamber, Scott was the CEO of the 2019 Canada Winter Games in Red Deer, following a 23-year career with Hockey Alberta. During his time at Hockey Alberta, he held various portfolios including Coordinator and Manager of High Performance, Senior Manager of Hockey Development, Senior Manager of Business Development, and Executive Director for the Hockey Alberta Foundation.

Scott started his academic career at Red Deer College where he studied Kinesiology in 1988 before graduating with a degree in Sport Administration in 1991 from the University of Alberta. In 2012, he completed a Master of Arts in Leadership from Royal Roads University. While at Royal Roads, Scott was selected from his cohort of 48 students to receive the Founders' Award signifying his dedication to sustainable and innovative leadership. Scott was awarded the Distinguished Alumni Award at Red Deer College in 2019.

An avid community volunteer, Scott has board and volunteer experience with Red Deer Polytechnic, the Donald School of Business, the Westerner Park Governance Committee, and the Alberta Parks Recreation Association.

Darcy Mykytyshyn

Darcy Mykytyshyn's career is a collection of experiences in financial services, home building, real estate development, economic development, corporate training, and post-secondary education, bound together by a recognized skill set and commitment to strategy development and the adherence to strong governance principles. These experiences are augmented by a Bachelor of Commerce (Accounting), the designation of ICD.D from the Institute of Corporate Directors, CCD from the Credit Union Executive Society (USA), certification as an Accredited Credit Union Director in Canada, completion of the Carver Policy Governance Academy, and numerous professional development programs, including from the University of Colorado, The Wharton School of Business, and the Harvard Graduate School of Education. A former board member of the Red Deer Chamber of Commerce, Credit Union Central Alberta, and the Co-operative Foundation of Canada, today he serves on the board of Servus Credit Union, Alberta's largest and Canada's 4th largest financial co-operative.

Darcy's personal and professional life has centred on building communities. His investments in Central Alberta include serving as President for the Rotary Club of Red Deer and Kinsmen Club of Red Deer, as well as serving as chair or vice chair for numerous community events, including the 2019 Canada Winter Games Bid Committee, 2013 Memorial Cup Bid Committee, Red Deer Festival of Trees, Red Deer College Wine Auction, Kinsmen Dream Home, and the United Way of Central Alberta Community campaign.

He is an active volunteer with the Red Deer Ski Club and is a former Scouts Canada leader for his two boys.

APPENDIX 2 - TASK FORCE TERMS OF REFERENCE

PURPOSE:
Review the current situation of Homelessness in Red Deer with an eye to providing recommendations for addressing the issues identified, with an emphasis on what the business community can affect. The Task Force will produce a report that will be provided to the Chamber of Commerce Board of Directors, the City of Red Deer, and the Province of Alberta outlining its findings.

MANDATE:
The Task Force is created by the authority of the Chamber CEO and is Chaired by an independent third party who holds ultimate responsibility for the work plan and outcomes of the Task Force.

The Task Force will provide;
- An Interim report, focused on outlining a comprehensive understanding of the homelessness issue, no later than January 2024.
- A Final Report, detailing recommendations, no later than March 2024.
- Identify potential areas of Policy Development that require advocacy at the Municipal, Provincial and Federal levels.

The Task Force will be disbanded within 30 days of delivering its final report.

Area of Responsibility	Authority
Identify bodies of research required to understand the issue and build context for developing recommendations	Principal
Identify individuals or groups for consultation in building the report	Principal
Identification of actions to address homelessness	Recommending
Identification of individuals/groups who should lead actions to address homelessness	Recommending
Changes to the Task Force Terms of Reference	Recommending

GUIDING PRINCIPLES :
- Healthy conflict - respectfully communicating different needs, values or viewpoints while valuing diverse beliefs, perceptions and opinions to allow the best ideas to emerge;
- Collaboration - working together to achieve a goal that one party cannot achieve on its own;
- Evidence-based - making decisions based on sound data collection and analysis;
- Social innovation - looking beyond existing solutions and encouraging new approaches to service delivery;
- Inclusion, diversity and equity - understanding, accepting and valuing the diversity within the community, while promoting fair and impartial outcomes.

CONFIDENTIALITY:

It is assumed that discussions of the Task Force are confidential unless otherwise declared. The Task Force will develop key messages after each meeting that members are free to use when sharing outside of the meeting.

COMPOSITION:

The Task Force will consist of no less than 9 community members, invited by the Chamber of Commerce, who are independent of any current services or agency providing services to the homeless community. Attributes used in soliciting members will include, but are not limited to;

- Community leadership experience
- Chamber membership
- Background in business
- Indigenous background
- Legal experience
- Political experience at the municipal and provincial levels

Each member of the Task Force will be recruited with the following competencies taken into consideration:

- Willingness to listen and engage in the exchange of ideas.
- Be respectful and considerate.
- Inquisitive with a willingness to ask thought-provoking questions.
- Advocate perspectives positively and with the aim of developing strong policy positions.
- Open-minded to the perspectives and opinions of colleagues and stakeholders.

The Chamber Board of Directors shall appoint one of its own to be a member of the Task Force.

ACCOUNTABILITY:

The Task Force is accountable to the Chamber CEO and The Board of Directors

REPORTING:

The Task Force shall provide a quarterly update on its progress to the Chamber CEO and to the Board, through the Chamber Board representative.

RESPONSIBILITY:

The Task Force Chair is responsible for the operation of the Task Force.

ADMINISTRATIVE SUPPORT:

The Chamber shall provide a Project Facilitator, Communications Consultant, and any other administrative support required, as identified by the Chair.

OPERATING PROCEDURES:

- The Chair of the Task Force will be appointed by the Chamber CEO.
- The Task Force will meet monthly, or as otherwise required at the discretion of the Chair.
- Agendas are set by the Chair, in consultation with the Chamber CEO.
- Meeting of the Task Force shall be closed to external parties, except where parties are asked to share insight, information or perspective.
- Changes to the Terms of Reference will be approved by the Chamber CEO

Levels of Authority for Decision Making:

Decision authority: The right to make a decision or create a policy without consultation with other individuals or groups.

Principal authority: The right to make a decision or create a policy with input and recommendations from other groups or individuals; such input may be accepted or rejected. Principal authority allows for the right to make decisions and create policy which is forwarded to another body for action. Decisions or policies may be forwarded to another group or individual for approval where such approval would not be unreasonably denied. The principal authority also permits policy creation within the guidelines established by another group or individual. Finally, principal authority accommodates decision-making or policy creation within the parameters set by another body.

Shared authority: Authority to make decisions or create policy that is delegated equally to two or more groups or individuals where all parties are required to approve the decision or policy.

Recommending authority: The right to make recommendations for approval by another group or individual, where the final decision may approve, reject, or amend the recommendations. Recommending authority specifies the requirement that the recommendations be received by the decision-making group or individual before a final decision is made.

Advising authority: The right to provide advice on a decision or policy created by another group or individual. The final decision may include or reject the advice provided. The group or individual making the decision in this case would be considered the principal authority.

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APPENDIX 4 - MATERIALS REVIEWED

In addition to the references listed in Appendix 3 and numerous news articles, the Task Force reviewed:

- Alberta Recovery Model system of care
- City of Red Deer Plans & Reports
- Facilitating community change: The Community Capitals Framework, its relevance to community psychology practice, and its application in a Georgia community
- Lethbridge Community Wellbeing & Safety Strategy – Overview & Learnings
- Lethbridge Community Wellbeing Needs Assessment Report
- Moncton Joint Action Report on Homelessness and Downtown Security
- Saving Lives, Alleviating Suffering & Building A Healthy, Strong & Safe Community For All

APPENDIX 5 - ORGANIZATIONS/INDIVIDUALS INTERVIEWED

TARGETED CONVERSATIONS AND PRESENTATIONS

- Amanda Gould, Downtown Business Association
- Bill Robinson, Sorento Custom Homes
- Brandon Bouchard, Downtown Business Association
- Brett Case, Ministry of Seniors, Community and Social Services
- City of Red Deer Planning Department
- Dr. Danica Hoffart, Central Alberta Women's Emergency Shelter
- Dr. Michael Mulholland, Facility Medical Director at Red Deer Regional Hospital
- Franklin Kutuadu, Red Deer Housing Authority
- Geoff Olson, Bridges Community Living
- Holly Glassford, RCMP
- Honourable Jason Nixon, Minister of Seniors, Community and Social Services, and Cabinet Staff
- Honourable Adriana LaGrange, Minister of Health and MLA Red Deer North, and Cabinet Staff
- Ian Wheeliker, The Outreach Centre
- Jason Stephen, MLA Red Deer South
- Lived Experience Council members
- Manon Therriault, Red Deer Regional Health Foundation
- Morris and Hazel Flewwelling
- Patrick Dumelie, Covenant Health
- Rubyann Rice, Schizophrenia Society of Alberta
- Ryan Veldkamp, City of Red Deer
- Sheli Murphy, Covenant Health
- Tammy Rogers, Canadian Mental Health Association

COMMUNITY TOURS AND EVENTS

Calgary - December 12, 2023
- Alpha House
- Calgary Homelessness Foundation
- Calgary Drop In Centre

Edmonton - December 8, 2023
- Ambrose Place
- Bissell Centre Community Drop In
- Homeward Trust
- Iris Court
- Westmount Supportive Housing

Red Deer
- Amethyst House (Canadian Mental Health Association)
- Bredin Centre for Career Advancement
- McMan Youth, Family & Community Services Association
- Red Deer Native Friendship Centre

- Red Deer Recovery Centre
- Red Deer Recovery Summit (Oct 2023)
- Safe Harbour Society
- Shining Mountain Living Community Services
- The Mustard Seed
- The Outreach Centre
- Why Can't You See Me Conference (Oct 2023)
- YMCA of Northern Alberta

COMMUNITY CONVERSATIONS

November 1, 2023
- Angela Fleming, Turning Point
- Chelsea O'Donoghue, United Way of Central Alberta
- Danby Felker, Street Connect - Alberta Health Services
- Darcee Smith, Turning Point Society
- Erin Peden, Red Deer & District Community Foundation
- Giselle Kutrowski, Canadian Mental Health Association
- Gordon Wright, John Howard Society of Red Deer
- Kath Hoffman, Central Alberta's Safe Harbour Society for Health and Housing
- Kathy Parson, Central Alberta Community Legal Clinic
- Krista Anderson, Lifelong Learning Council of Red Deer
- Laurie Whitaker, CrossRoads Church
- Mel Gauvreau, MCG Careers
- Michelle Schafers, AHS Street Connect
- Mitch Thomson, Red Deer Food Bank Society
- Nichole Schneidmiller, Turning Point
- Rob Lewis, Youth HQ
- Robin McBride, Central Alberta Community Legal Clinic
- Sandy Proseilo, Vantage Community Services
- Shelley Dallas-Smith, Alberta Health Services
- Shelley Ross, Central Alberta Community Legal Clinic
- Tammy Rogers, CMHA
- Thara Kumar, Central Alberta Community Legal Clinic

November 2, 2023
- Alison Weir, Central Alberta Poverty Reduction Alliance
- Art Anastasi, Abbey Master Builders
- Bill Hull, Hifi Engineering
- Brad Dufresne, The Phone Experts Communications Ltd.
- Devon Snideman, Dick's Auto & Truck Repair
- Guy Pelletier, Melcor Developments Ltd.
- Ines Bozdech, Bozdech Eye Clinic
- Jose Muyot, Grand Central Properties Inc.
- Julia Johnson, TD Commercial Bank
- Julie Vale, Sensible Business Management
- Leon Oosterhoff, Double O Holdings Ltd.
- Linda McLevin, McLevin Industries Inc.
- Lori Jack, United Way of Central Alberta
- Matt Mason, Mason Martin Homes

- Mike Samson, Kipp Scott GMC
- Mindi Ganson, Strategis LLP
- Odie Padios, MCG Careers Inc.
- Pat Moore, Central Alberta Family Expo
- Ron Chabot, Business owner
- Sheena Johnson, The Bra Lounge Inc
- Steve Schiestel, Summit Strategies Chartered Professional Accountants
- Tammy Schlamp, Speedpro Signs - Red Deer
- Terry Coutts, Looker Office Furniture
- Tracey Kinsella, Alberta Sports Hall of Fame
- Tracy Chabot, Business owner