
Suggestions for Reducing Housing-Shortages and Possibly Resolving Homelessness Altogether In Thunder Bay

By Wolfgang Schoor

October 14, 2024

Introduction

- Hi my name is Wolfgang Schoor BIS.CCS
- Thank you for allowing me to be here. I've been invited to talk about homelessness and housing at the request of our honorable mayor Ken Boshcoff
- I have been involved within the framework of construction including as supervisor and consultant for the past 50 years
- I hold a degree from University of Waterloo in Building Construction & Domestic Ergonomics
- I also did a qualifying year with the U of W for a master degree in environmental studies and regional planning
- I studied Canadian History and Material Culture at the Lakehead University
- I have a Business Management Diploma and Studied Engineering and Architectural Design Technology here at our local Confederation Collage of Applied Arts and Technology
- I am a certified Carpenter and Joiner in Canada and Germany
- I have patents in life safety systems, hand tool systems, and Engineered Lumber Building Systems in Canada and the US

Agenda

- The agenda for this presentation is offering solutions related to housing and impending homelessness
- Homelessness was estimated to affect 693 people in 2021 (The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board)
- Independent estimates show this number to be much higher and that number is steadily increasing in 2024
- Many people now live in what we call tent cities

Tent Cities in Various Locations in the City of Thunder Bay, Oct. 2024



Preamble

- Homelessness has become a visible and growing issue in the City of Thunder Bay
- Tent-City living condition limits opportunities for the individuals living there
- This also limits citizens' ability to enjoy public green spaces and parks

My Experience of Building a Community, a **Self-Funded Study**, 1990's-2024

- I have been working on a social and physical residential living environment for the last 30 or so years; a project called Villa House, with the aim of building and providing a ...livable and affordable co-habitation environment

Project Progressions, Timeline and Client Mix

1990-1997: **Transition home** for socially disadvantaged people and people that offended against the law

- With a goal of providing a supportive, yet independent living was a requirement

1997-2000: **Official Halfway House** for Correctional Services of Canada

- Providing residential services including a supportive and independent living environment for federal parolees, 6 months at a time for each parolee; while at the same time assuring that public safety was maintained within the Correctional Services Act

2000 to present: **Residential services** to Canadian residents and international students from 5 continents

- Operating within a Municipally Licensed Lodging House including self contained furnished apartments

Solutions: An Overview

- It seems to me 'homelessness' is a huge issue, and one of many other underlying factors; far reaching and beyond the current housing crisis
- I have provided you with my version of the implied problem. For the sake of this presentation, my focus lies within 'Housing'. My analogies are based on the results of literature review and years of my applied research projects from within other locations in Canada and elsewhere in the world.
- The following is a provision for three of my solutions, however, without a doubt, there will be many others as well:
 1. Tiny Home Clusters
 2. Non Rented Living Units
 3. Glamping

Solution #1: Tiny Homes and Pocket Neighbourhoods

Tiny home clusters are livable communities

- Tiny home clusters can offer an affordable and practical solution for people with modest financial means, creating living spaces that are manageable and fit for human habitation. These small communities encourage close interactions among neighbors, fostering supportive relationships.

One of the benefits is the sense of community and belonging

- Based on mine and other research, people become a reflection of how and where they live. When people live in a harmonious living environment, it reflects in their behavior in the community. On the other hand, when people live within frustrating living environments, that frustration is also reflected in the community.

A pilot project within the inner city core may yield benefits

- A viable solution could be for our city to set up pilot projects containing clusters of Tiny Homes, to test this concept, this has been done elsewhere, just recently in Winnipeg Manitoba for example.

Clusters of Tiny Homes, a number of 3 to 5 Unit assemblies



Solution #2: Non-Rented Lodging-Rooms and Apartment Units

- About 3% of apartments and units in Thunder Bay are unoccupied (CMHC 2023)
- Of the 29 licensed Lodging Houses 15 or so years ago, we are lucky to have 10 still in operation, Villa House is one of them...an estimated 100 or so lodging rooms were lost.
- Why are units unoccupied?...and why were lodging rooms lost ???
 1. Because of the forever changing requirements effecting upkeep cost,...city officials justifiably have been reluctantly shutting places down for various reasons.
 2. More importantly, because of the damage caused by destructive tenants often costs the landlord more than income generated by renting the units, therefore they opt not to rent
- Ideally property owners expect to get a fair return on their investment
- A solution could be the creation of a learning center to acquaint both landlords and tenants with their rights and compelling obligations, participation would be on a compelling or voluntary basis

Solution #3: Glamping As Opposed To Tenting

- Glamping can be a viable short-term alternative to tenting
- Glamping, short for “glamours camping”, is a step up from regular tenting in terms of health and safety. Glamping provides some elevated level of human comfort compared to tenting, however, the intent would be at best...short term
- Glamping can be implemented cost effective and quickly

Structural Arrangement: Tenting vs Glamping



Tenting this picture is local



Glamping, picture was taken from an online source

To Get In Touch For More Detailed Information

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