

Presentation to the Housing Taskforce for the Mayor Ken Boshcoff, 2024

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

By Wolfgang Schoor

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# Introduction

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- Hi my name is Wolfgang Schoor BIS.CCS
- Thank you for allowing me to be here. I've been invited to talk about homelessness 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 Science, Building Construction, and Domestic Ergonomics
- I also did a qualifying year with the U of W for a master degree in environmental studies and regional planning
- I also 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 College 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

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- The agenda for this presentation is offering solutions related to housing and impending homelessness
- Homelessness was estimated to affect 793 people in 2021 (The District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board)
- Independent estimates show this number is much higher and steadily increasing in 2024, 2025 and 2026
- Many people now live in what we call tent cities, most likely a dozen or so encampments

# Tent Cities in Various Locations in the City of Thunder Bay

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# Problem

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- 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**, 1990-2026

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- 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 cohabitation environment, a people system that is fit for human habitation.

## **Villa-House Project Progressions Timeline and Client Mix**

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

- With goal of providing a supporting yet independent living arrangement while at the same time consider the safety of our community

1997-2000: **Official halfway house** for correctional services of Canada

- Provided a supportive living environment for federal parolees

2000 to present: **Residential services** to Canadian residents and international newcomer and students from 6 continents

- Licensed lodging house and self contained apartments

# Solutions: An Overview

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- It seems to me 'homelessness' is a huge issue, and one of many other underlying factors; far reaching and beyond the current housing crisis and the intent of this presentation.
- I have provided you with my version of the 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 self-funded 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

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## 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 and fostering supportive relationships. [See illustration.](#)

## One of the benefits is the sense of community and belonging

Based on my 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, Alberta, and BC for example.

# Clusters of Tiny Homes, a number of 3 to 8 unit assemblies

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## Solution #2: Non-Rented Living Units

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About 3% of apartments and units in Thunder Bay are unoccupied (CMHC 2023)

Of the 29 licensed Lodging Houses 15 or so years ago to day, we are lucky to have 10 still in operation, Villa House is one of them...an estimated several hundred or so lodging rooms were lost and not rebuilt

- Why are units unoccupied? .and why were lodging rooms lost?
  1. Because of the forever changing requirements affecting upkeep cost,...city officials justifiably have been reluctantly shutting places down for various reasons public health and fire safety being some of them. Many other burned down or were demolished as a result of infill renewal.
  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

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

# Example of Tenting vs Glamping

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Tenting

this picture is local

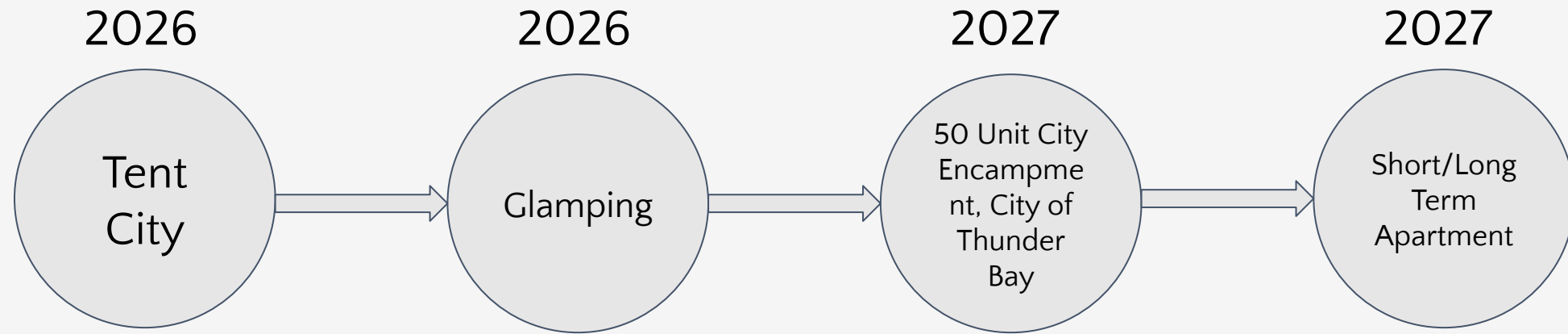


Glamping

picture was taken from an online source

# Reintegration Process For Living Arrangements: From Tents To Apartments, by Wolfgang Schoor Thunder Bay Ontario

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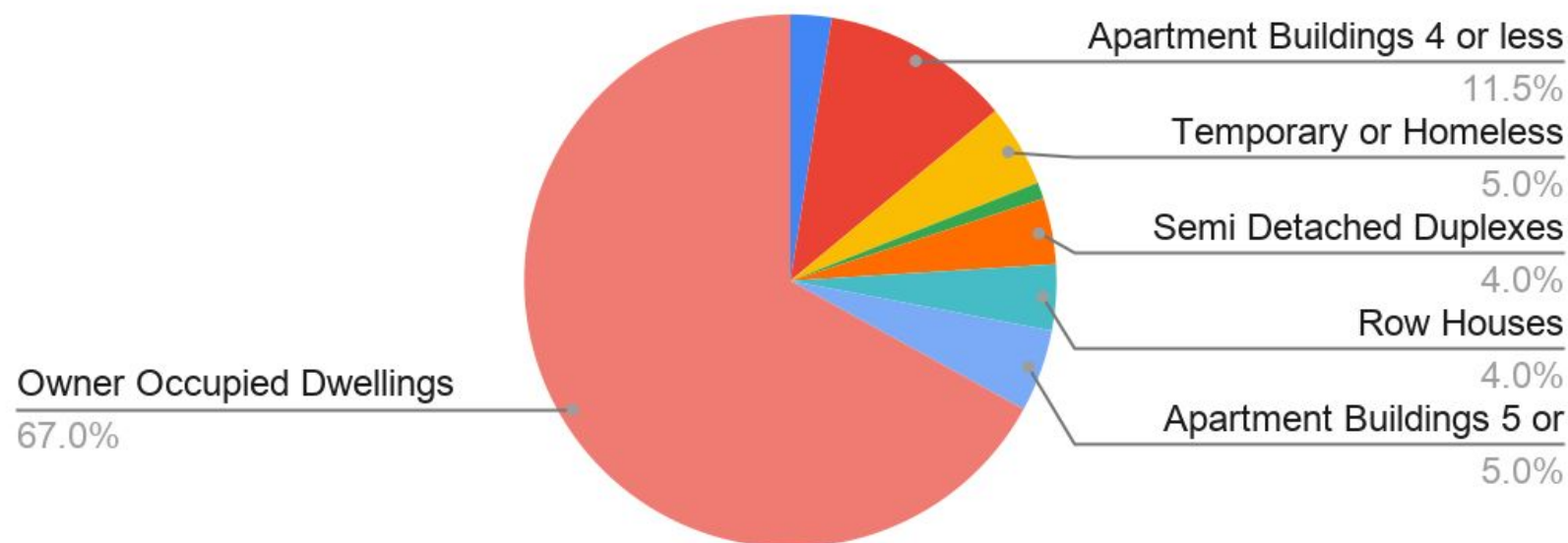
Please note the details of the established transitionary period to be explained on a separate document

# Thunder Bay Living Arrangements By Structural Types

A study a few years ago revealed that about 700 people were homeless in the city of Thunder Bay.

However some people feel the numbers are increasingly higher than that

## Thunder Bay Living Arrangements by Structural Types



\*Numeric orders are all estimated