

# Pillar 4: Meaningful Participation

RETHINKING MUNICIPAL POLICY RESPONSES TO ENCAMPMENTS:  
BUILDING A HUMAN RIGHTS APPROACH IN ONTARIO



We explored whether there was evidence of lived expertise engagement in developing encampment protocols, recognition of the autonomy of encampment residents in making decisions about their own lives, and any mechanisms for encampment residents to participate in making decisions about encampments or provide feedback.

## Exploratory Questions

We used these questions to assess the extent to which municipalities had meaningfully engaged with people living in encampments in their encampment responses. They show our guiding lens, as applied across the different jurisdictions we observed in Ontario.

- *Is there any evidence of lived expertise engagement in the process of developing encampment protocols or other relevant policies?*
- *Do bylaws and/or protocols recognize the autonomy of encampment residents in making decisions concerning their immediate options for shelter?*
- *Do protocols provide a mechanism for encampment residents to participate in local decision-making concerning encampments?*

## Report Findings

Overall, we found very limited opportunities for encampment residents to participate in decisions that directly affect their lives, despite meaningful participation being a core principle of a human rights-based approach.

There was little evidence of meaningful engagement of encampment residents in encampment protocols and minimal documentation of consultation in accompanying staff reports and website documents.

Where engagement with people living in encampments was noted, there was limited accountability in terms of reporting what people said and/or how these engagements influenced protocol and policy.



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