



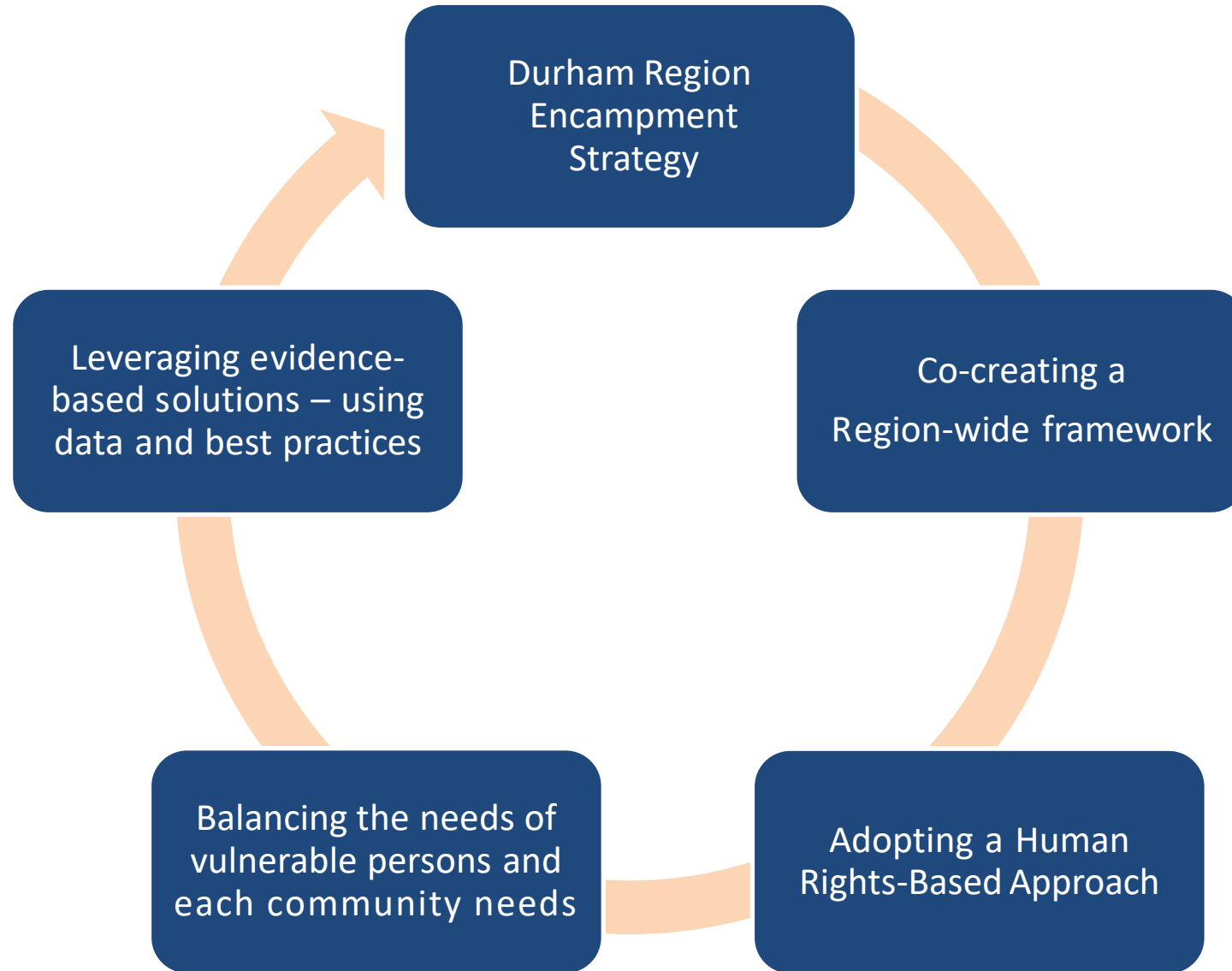
# Durham Region Encampment Strategy

**Health and Social Services Committee**  
**March 6, 2025**

**Lisa McIntosh**

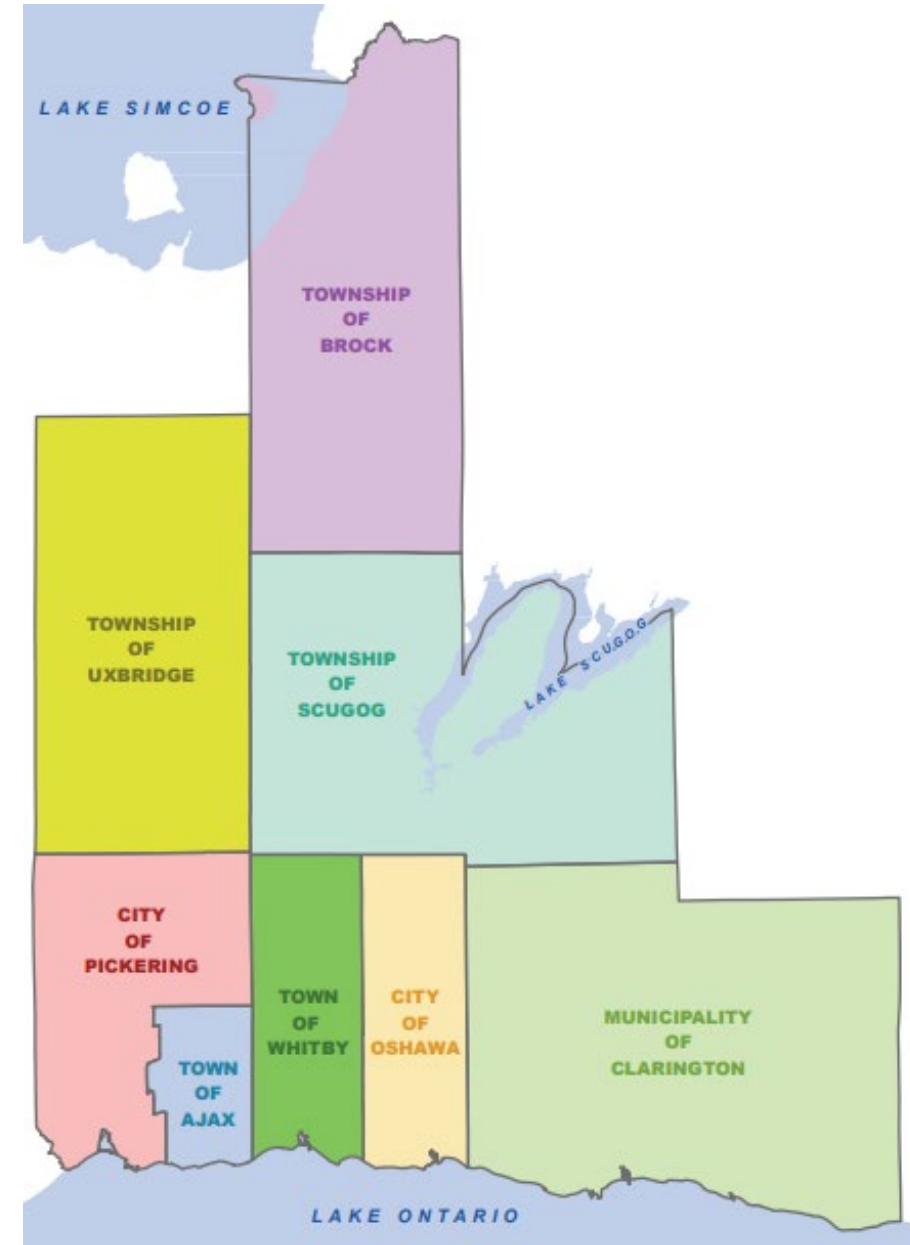
Director - Income, Employment & Homelessness Supports

# Objective and Approach for Encampment Strategy



# Engagement Process Overview

- Extensive community consultation was conducted
- Key informant interviews and focus groups with local area municipal staff, regional services, and the unhoused community – The Gap Committee
- Key messages gathered included:
  - Need to protect human rights
  - Lack of clarity regarding roles
  - Negative community stigma
  - Lack of housing options
  - Inadequate shelter facilities
  - Structural violence
  - Mental health and addiction support



# Managing the Current State

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Homeless encampments are a reality due to the lack of affordable housing.

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Encampments are **not endorsed as a solution** but are managed to support the unhoused individuals with an **aim to eliminate them**.

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A human rights-based approach is adopted to ensure that individuals' rights are upheld. Services are offered to help individuals move along a continuum to end their homelessness.



# Durham Region Encampments

Homeless encampment is defined as *encroaching or making exclusive occupancy of a space, constituting one or more people with personal belongings that have a high degree of mobility.*



Total **98** encampments with  
**53** Abandoned  
**44** Active

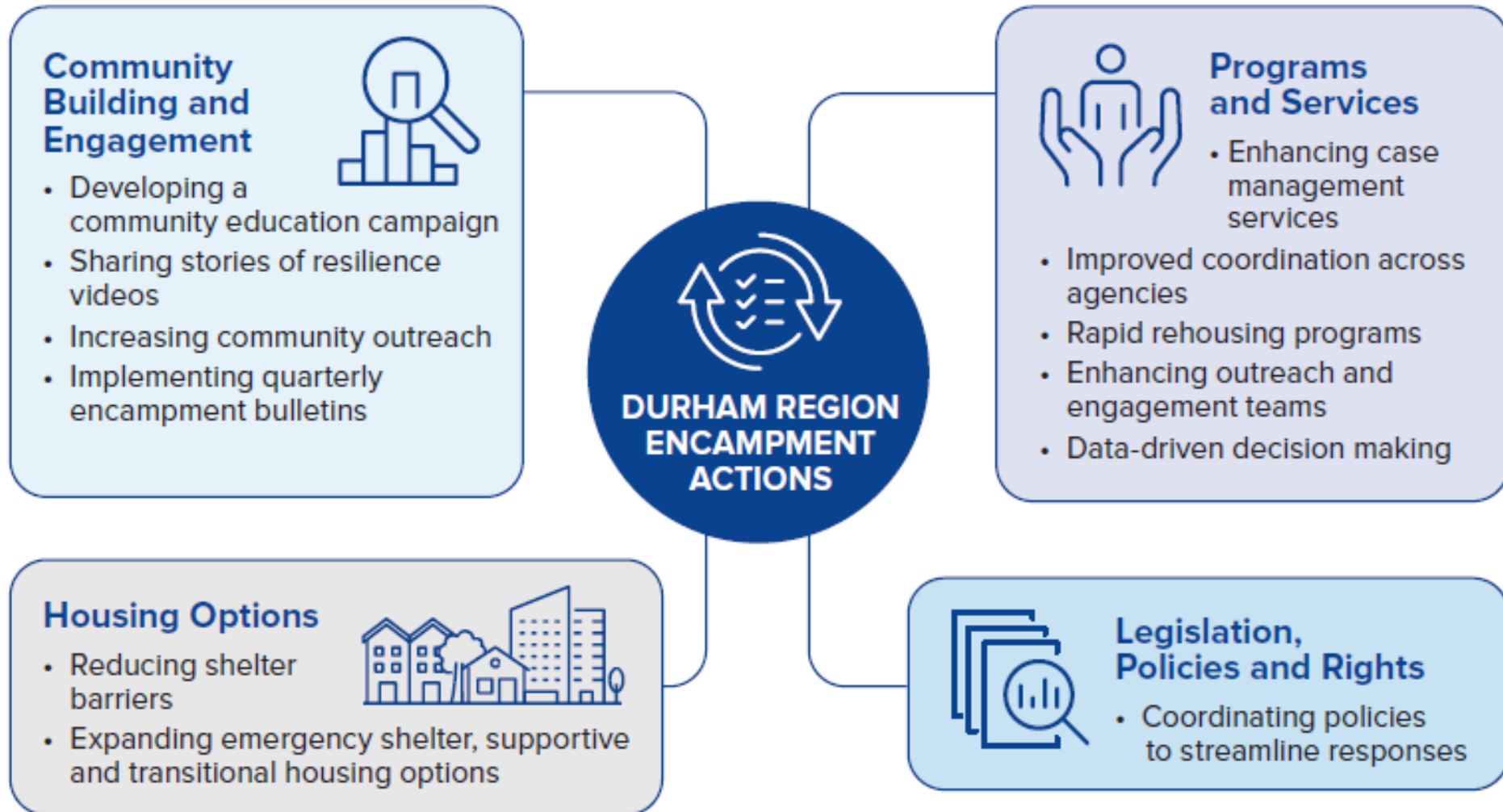


**80** individuals present

## Municipality Breakdown: Active Encampments in 2024

**Ajax:** 14 active with 34 people present  
**Clarington:** 5 active with 7 people present  
**Oshawa:** 15 active with 26 people present  
**Pickering:** 3 active with 3 people present  
**Whitby:** 7 active with 10 people present  
**Unknown:** 1

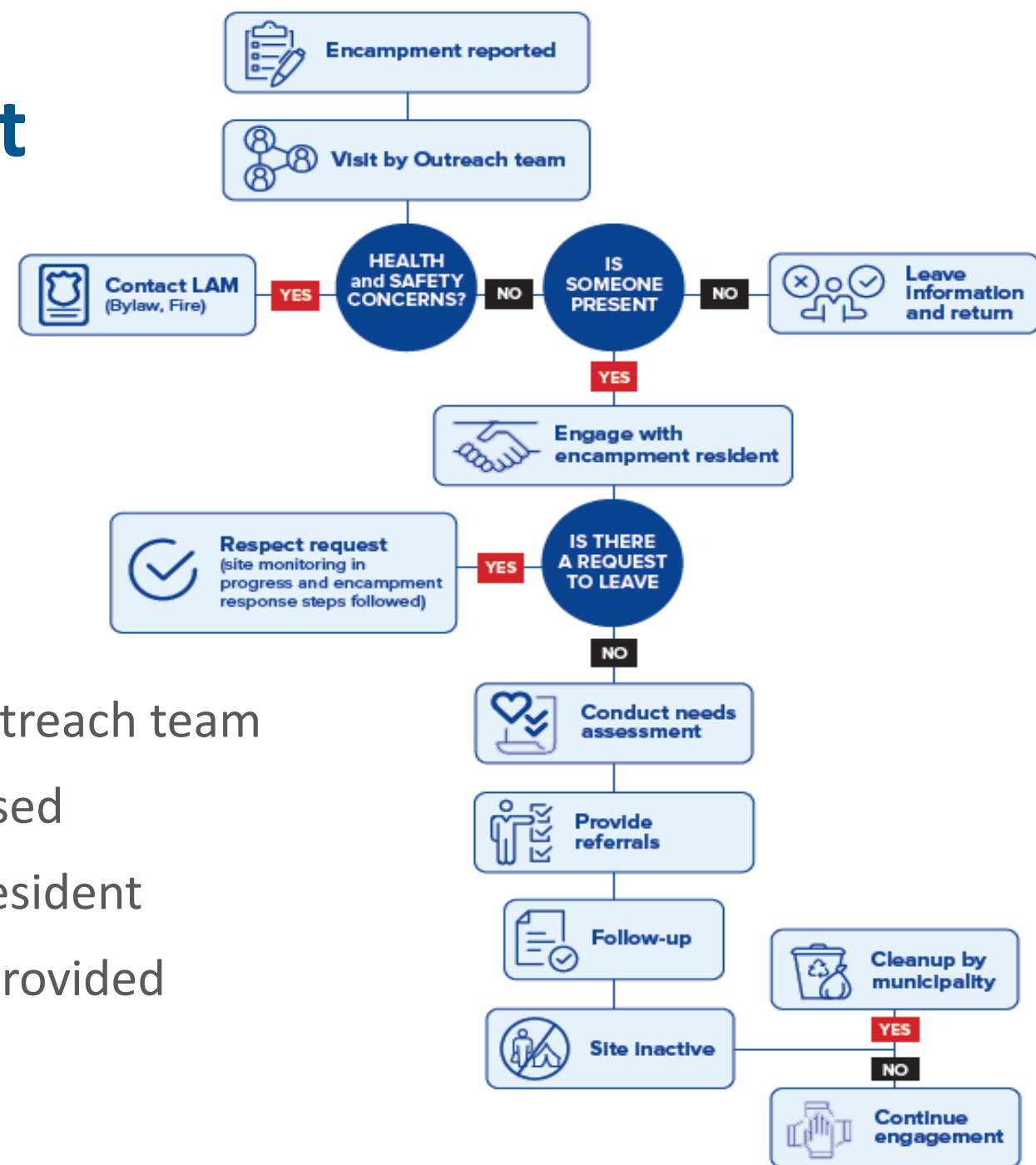
# Current Actions in Progress



# Homeless Encampment Reporting Process

## Process Overview:

- Encampment reported
- Visit by Durham Region Street Outreach team
- Health and safety concerns assessed
- Engagement with encampment resident
- Needs assessment and referrals provided
- Follow-up and site monitoring





# Encampments on Public Land

## Roles, Responsibilities & Resources

### Durham Region Social Services:

- Track encampment locations and monitor health and safety issues
- Collaborate with Fire, By-law, Paramedics, and Primary Care Outreach Program to support the unhoused community
- Lead safety education initiatives for encampment residents
- Offer housing-focused supports and lead initiatives for housing solutions

### Local Area Municipalities (including By-law):

- Identify and track encampment locations, monitoring health and safety issues
- Provide notice of encampment removals
- Respond to breaches of local By-laws
- Lead active clean-up of encampment sites and surrounding debris
- Support dismantling and cleaning of abandoned sites, collaborating with Regional Street Outreach Program (RSOP)
- Communicate community By-laws, rights, and policies to the public

### Local Area Municipalities Fire:

- Provide fire-specific safety education to those in encampments

### Durham Region Police Services:

- Will respond to requests for assistance in accordance with the law and operational considerations

### Primary Care Outreach Program:

- Track health/safety issues
- Support the mental health and well-being of encampment residents



# Encampments on Private Land

## Roles, Responsibilities & Resources

### Private Property Owners:

- Identify and inform Region of encampments
- Provide notice for removal
- Clean-up and dismantle abandoned encampments

### Durham Region Social Services:

- Track and identify encampments, address health/safety issues
- Collaborate with Fire, By-law, Paramedics, and PCOP to support the health and well-being of the unhoused community
- Lead safety education and housing support initiatives
- Lead in offering housing focused supports

### Local Area Municipalities Fire:

- Provide fire-specific safety education to those in encampments

### Durham Region Police Services:

- Will respond to requests for assistance in accordance with the law and operational considerations

### Primary Care Outreach Program:

- Support in tracking and recording any health and safety issues in encampments
- Support the mental health and well-being of encampment residents

### Local Area Municipalities (including By-law):

- Respond to by-law breaches
- Communicate By-law, policies and rights
- Coordinate joint inspections, if necessary, with RSOP and DRPS
- Notify property owners of violations and removal
- Support relocation or removal of individuals

# Moving Beyond Encampments

## Expedite Action Plan Recommendations

Implementing the Integrated Homelessness System Action Plan to enhance temporary and supportive housing.

### Collaborate on Service Planning

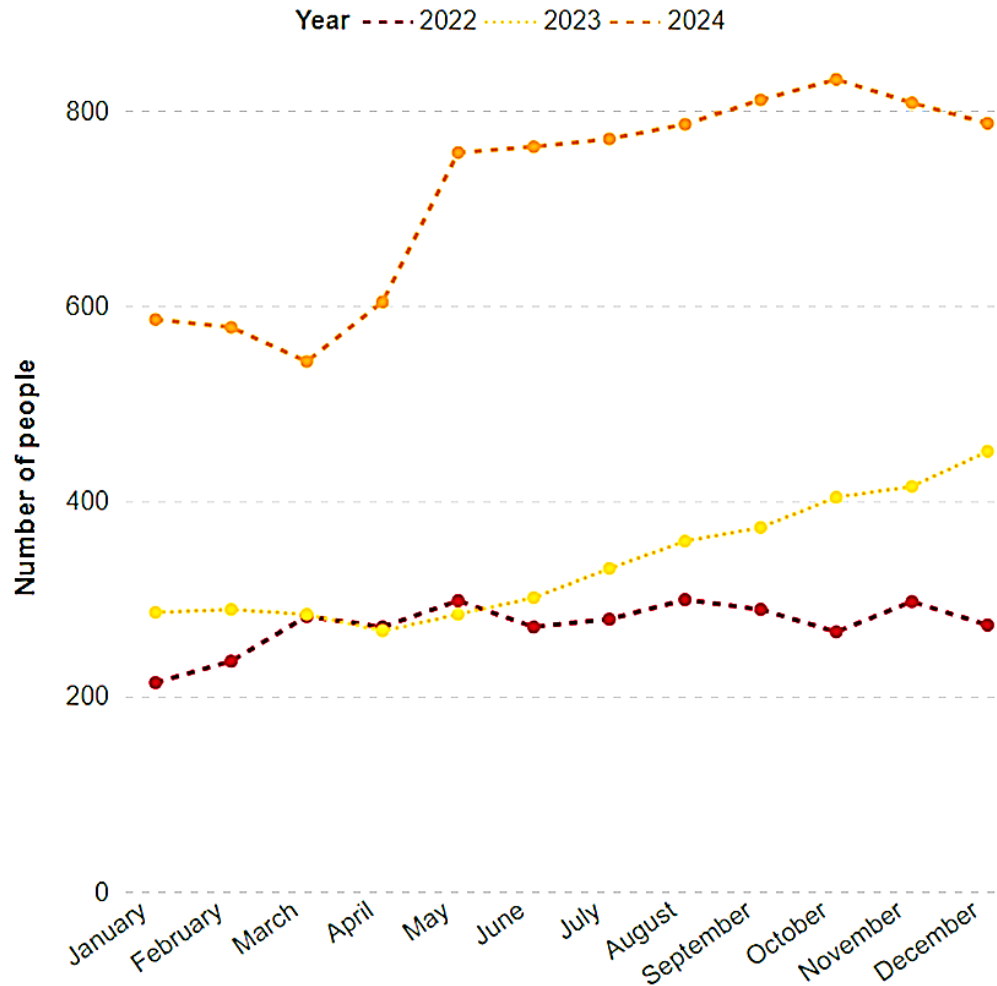
Working with municipalities to ensure service planning meets community needs.

### Partner with Municipalities for Land Use

Collaborating with local municipalities to expedite planning approvals and utilize surplus land for housing.

# Durham Homelessness Numbers

## Annual Number of People on the By-Name List 2021 – 2024



January 2025  
By-Name List

At least  
**806**

Over  
**93%** with  
Mid to High  
Acuity

## Municipality Breakdown: Actively Homeless January 2025

Ajax: 175  
Clarington: 29  
North Durham (Brock 7, Scugog 12, Uxbridge 11): 30  
Oshawa: 388  
Pickering: 31  
Whitby: 124  
\*Other/ Unknown: 29

Refers to people who may have not been living in Durham but have a meaningful connection to Durham, or who are working with the homelessness support system to complete intake information.



# Questions

**Lisa McIntosh**

Director - Income, Employment & Homelessness Supports  
Social Services Department

[durham.ca](http://durham.ca)

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