



## Commentary from CEO Julian Daly

With recent events around Pandora Avenue, I wanted to provide an update and some perspective on the situation.

For years, we have been advocating for action to end street homelessness, urging authorities to provide appropriate shelter, housing, and necessary mental health supports. It is unacceptable – and even immoral – that anyone should live rough, and I know this deeply concerns you as much as it does every employee at Our Place. We are glad that these calls for action appear to have been finally heard and are being acted upon.

Last week's council decision marks a significant change, signaling that daytime sheltering and encampments will no longer be tolerated in Victoria. While there has been a ban on daytime sheltering for some time, enforcement has been inconsistent. It seems only a matter of time before these will come to an end across the city.

Our main concern is how this transition will be managed. It is crucial that appropriate shelter spaces and mental health supports are available to end street homelessness humanely and effectively. All stakeholders must work together to ensure success. We must avoid repeating last month's sweep, where people were displaced and traumatized.

We plan to work collaboratively with the City, law enforcement, Island Health, and BC Housing to ensure the transition is handled humanely. This includes giving advance warning to prepare individuals and ensuring they move to better situations, with access to appropriate shelter and timely physical and mental health care. The tents are people's homes, and this needs to be understood and respected during the transition.

Prior to recent events, work had already begun earnestly to end street homelessness in Victoria. We are part of a small Encampment Action Group, co-chaired by the City and BC Housing, established about four weeks ago to find better living situations for the unhoused in our city. The group has all the right people at the table to effect a collective and sustainable solution. The action-oriented nature of this group gives me hope for positive outcomes.

Finally, I want to thank you for your continued support and dedication. Thank you for sticking with us and trusting the very important work that we do. I look forward to providing you with more positive and hopeful updates very soon.

Thank you and take care,

**Julian Daly, CEO**  
**Our Place Society**