

# Community Town Hall on Homelessness in Ajax

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



# Land Acknowledgement

*We acknowledge that the land on which we gather is situated within the traditional and treaty territory of the Mississaugas of Scugog Island First Nation, signatories of the Gunshot Treaty of 1788 and the Williams Treaties of 1923. This land is, and will continue to be, home to the Indigenous Peoples.*

*Let us acknowledge the mistakes and traumas of the past through authenticity and support truth and reconciliation, as we move forward with kindness and respect as a community*

# Agenda

- Welcome and Introductions
- Land Acknowledgement
- Town of Ajax Presentation
- Region of Durham – Social Services Presentation
- Durham Regional Police Services Presentation
- Question & Answers
- Closing Remarks & Guest Speakers

# Introductions

- Town of Ajax
  - Kassandra Brownridge, Manager of Strategic Initiatives
  - Kyle Campbell, Manager of By-law Services
  - Tim Field, Manager of Environmental Services
  - Robin Williams, Corporate Security Specialist
- Region of Durham
  - Sahar Foroutani, Manager, Income, Employment & Homelessness Support
  - Jocelyn Siciliano, Area Manager, Homelessness and Anti-Human Trafficking
- Durham Regional Police Services
  - Stefanie Finateri, Superintendent, West Division
  - David Palmer, Inspector, West Division
  - Jesse Halik, Sergeant, West Division
- Guest Speakers
  - Adam Smith
  - Daniel Cullen

# Purpose of Today's Town Hall

- Deliver information on how the three on-the-ground entities (Town, Region and DRPS) respond to the complex issue of homelessness in Ajax
- Provide responses to resident and business owner questions during a respectful Q&A period
- Hear from individuals with lived experience to help ground and conclude our discussion

# Council-Directed Motion

- This community Town Hall is being held in response to the following direction, which was adopted at the September 2025 meeting of Ajax Council:
  - *That Staff be directed to coordinate a public town hall meeting for residents and businesses about the impacts of homelessness in Ajax with the appropriate staff from the Region of Durham and Durham Regional Police Services.*

# Roles & Responsibilities

- **Government of Canada**
  - National policy and funding (including capital), income supports
- **Government of Ontario**
  - System steward, primary funder, health care (including mental health), provincial policy
- **Region of Durham**
  - System Manager and Delivery Authority for Housing and Homelessness, downloaded Social Services, Public Health and Policing
- **Durham Regional Police Services**
  - Community safety and law enforcement
- **Town of Ajax**
  - Enforcement of by-laws and public spaces, advocacy and facilitation of community supports and partnerships, land use planning and zoning

# Town-led Initiatives

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# 27 Station Street

- The Town was the first and remains the only municipality that has provided municipally-owned space for an emergency shelter
- The Town leased a Sales Pavilion at 27 Station Street (Achilles and Harwood)
- Currently operates as a 30 bed, co-ed and pet friendly shelter

# Post-COVID Community Supports

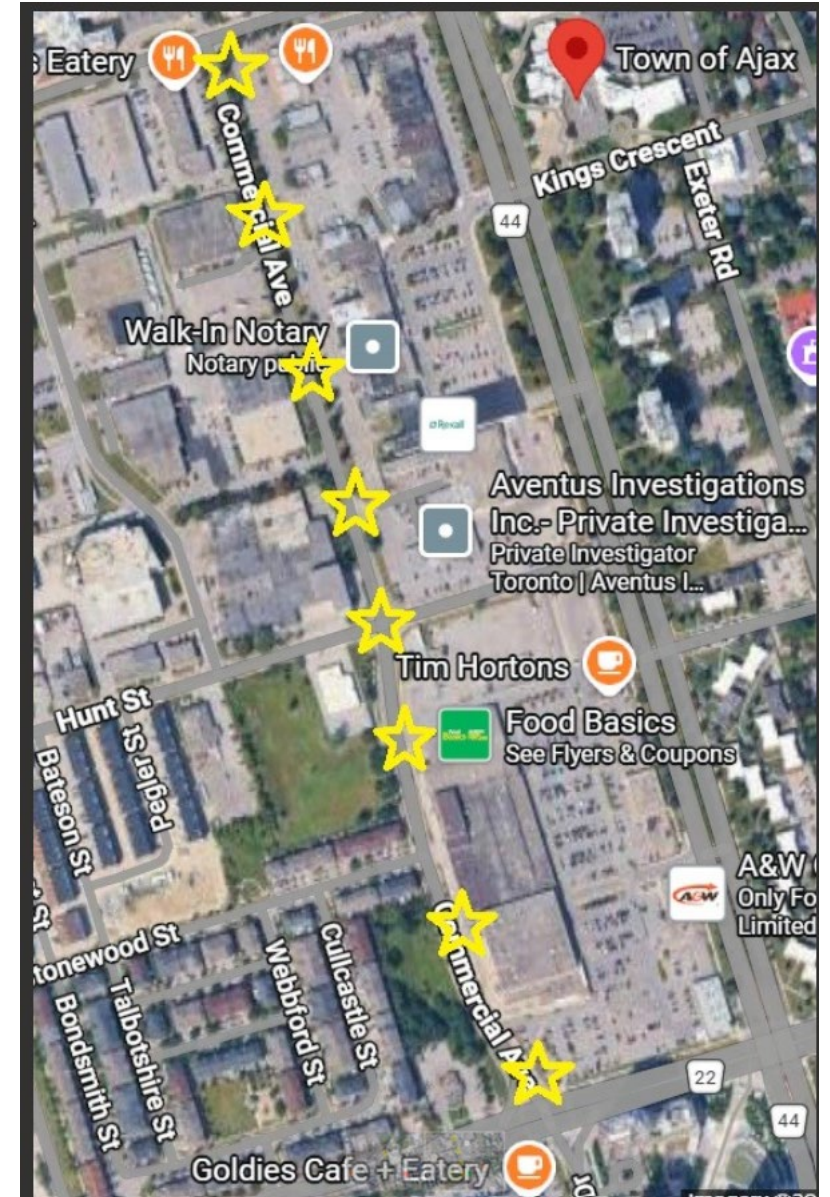
- Invested in a designated Community Supports Coordinator
- Ajax Locker Program in Partnership with Salvation Army
- Daily Shower Program at Town Community Centres
- Ajax Partnership Fund grant funding for community support organizations, including local food banks and mental health service providers, and for security measures for Downtown Ajax businesses
- EDI Training for Christian Faith Outreach Centre staff
- Increased security presence in Ajax Plaza, including before 8:00 a.m.
- Town-led mental health, food security and community well-being initiatives

# Encampment & Debris Management

- Focused on high impact encampments, including significant safety concerns
- Managed through a responsive and compassionate protocol
- Complaint-driven
- Multi-team endeavour
- Daily scopes and clean-ups, particularly in spring/summer
- Estimated costs are over \$250,000 per year (in 2025), with 50% of recovered from the Region of Durham

# CCTV Cameras Partnership

- Partnership between the Town and DRPS, partially funded by a provincial government grant
- 9 CCTV cameras
  - 8 on Commercial Avenue
  - 1 at Achilles and Harwood



# Encampment at Achilles & Harwood

- An unprecedented managed encampment was established in Fall 2025 at Achilles Road and Harwood Avenue
- First of its kind in the Region, included security, police and sanitary services
- Up to 25 individuals were on the site
- Town did not enforce its encampment management protocol or relevant by-laws as the Region responded to the crisis
- Many individuals were transitioned into the system or forms of housing prior to the closure of the site; remainder were encouraged to attend Winter Warming

# 140 Commercial Avenue

- Initiated by the Region of Durham in Fall 2025
- Ajax Council approved Temporary Zoning for a proposed shelter in Ajax that would have provided up to 50 beds and other health and social services
- Goal was to consolidate services and move the Ajax Hub operations to a better suited facility
- Committed to expedited Fire Prevention and Building Code reviews of the space
- Property owner ultimately did not approve the terms of the lease for the Region to operate, and project was never realized

# Town Hall Winter Warming Centre

- The Town approved use of a portion of Town Hall in January 2025 as a winter warming centre
- Initially temporary, the Centre is now opened nightly until March 15
- Sleeping cots are provided for 20-25 individuals each night, providing better outcomes, with up to 500
- Hours of Operation are currently 7 p.m. until 7 a.m. Monday through Friday, and 7 p.m. until 9 a.m. on the weekends and holidays
- The Town is the only lower tier municipality in Durham to offer their Town Hall as a warming centre

# Crisis Care Facility By-law

- Approved in November 2025 by Ajax Council and launching in March 2026
- Licensing regime to regulate shelters or social service providers operated by public authorities or appointed agencies
- **Not** a punitive tool or intended to limit access to shelters by individuals experiencing homelessness
- Goals of the by-law are to:
  - **Create a safer environment for patrons**, including by requiring a Code of Conduct, and Zoning, Fire Prevention and Building Code compliance
  - **Mitigate impacts on neighbours**, including requiring mandatory security presence to manage nuisance matters and setting clear expectations on property standards
  - **Increase accountability for operators and their funders**, including up to license revocation

# Kassandra Brownridge

*Manager of Strategic Initiatives*

Public and Strategic Affairs

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