



We All Care

Central Alberta is full of caring people and committed organizations already doing vital work. Shelters, outreach teams, housing programs, and frontline workers are all doing their best to support people in crisis. The compassion is real. The effort is strong. But despite all this good work, homelessness continues to rise.



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The Red Deer Homeless Foundation

The Red Deer Homeless Foundation¹ was created:

- To lead a unified, community-driven response to homelessness that replaces fragmentation with coordination.
- To serve as the central, non-governmental “backbone” organization managing strategy, funding, and partnerships.
- To integrate business discipline and community compassion, ensuring outcomes are measurable, sustainable, and locally governed.
- To align Red Deer’s homelessness strategy with Alberta’s provincial health, housing, and social service reforms — ensuring local innovation supports system-wide goals.

The Foundation exists because Red Deer’s community recognized that housing stability requires a coordinated system, a trusted convener, and shared leadership — not just more programs.

Our Pillars



Community Connections and Advocacy

As a trusted convener, we unite Red Deer Region stakeholders to build partnerships, foster trust, and drive coordinated, community-driven solutions.



Housing Supply

We are committed to advancing affordable, community-informed housing solutions as a pathway to stability and dignity for those facing homelessness in the Red Deer Region.



Leveraging Resources

The Foundation will strengthen its operational and financial foundations by focusing on strategic partnerships, including in-kind support and skilled volunteer contributions, so as to avoid duplicative effort.



Philanthropy

We believe success is achieved by uniting individuals, businesses, and institutions around shared investments in real, lasting solutions to homelessness

The leadership² of the Red Deer Homeless Foundation represents a rare and powerful blend of experience, perspective, and purpose. This is a team that combines deep business acumen with hands-on community experience — bringing together leaders from sectors such as housing, health, education, construction, Indigenous relations, social services, governance, and finance. They are entrepreneurs, executives, advocates, and community builders who understand both the human and economic dimensions of homelessness. Their diverse backgrounds allow them to see the issue from every angle — from frontline realities to policy, from boardroom strategy to neighbourhood impact.

What truly sets them apart is their social entrepreneurial spirit — a belief that innovation, accountability, and compassion must coexist. They are not afraid to challenge old systems, evaluate new ideas, and take smart risks if it means achieving better outcomes for those who need them most. This team leads with both head and heart, driven by the conviction that real change happens when community leaders work together with creativity, courage, and a relentless focus on results.

¹ [Red Deer Homeless Foundation | Housing & Support](#)

² [Who We Are | Mission, Team & Accountability](#)

The Concept

Project Nexus

Project Nexus represents an evidence-based, fiscally responsible, and community-driven response to homelessness — a model that translates proven success from other jurisdictions into Alberta’s mid-sized city context.

Project Nexus will integrate emergency shelter, housing navigation, health and addiction recovery, employment, and social services into a single, 202,625 sq. ft. facility at 7740 40 Avenue. It builds on Alberta’s Four Pillars Health System Reform³, Action Plan on Homelessness⁴, and the City of Red Deer’s Community Housing and Homelessness Integrated Plan (CHHIP)⁵ to achieve measurable outcomes for both people and systems.

At Project Nexus, community partners work together — not as one big super agency, but as a caring network — helping people find hope, stability, and belonging.

Project Nexus complements Alberta’s PCN model by extending integrated, team-based care beyond traditional health services — bridging health, housing, and social supports to create a seamless, community-first approach to wellness.

Key Elements of Project Nexus

- **Team-Based, Integrated Care.** Project Nexus brings diverse professionals together to address people’s physical, mental, and social needs through coordinated, person-centered support.
- **Simplified Access and Navigation.** Like PCNs, Project Nexus helps people connect to the right care at the right time, reducing barriers and duplication across systems.
- **Prevention and Early Intervention.** Both models emphasize early, coordinated intervention to prevent worsening health and social outcomes. Project Nexus’s integrated services can reduce ER visits, hospital stays, and justice involvement — outcomes that PCNs also work to minimize through proactive care.
- **Community-Driven and Evidence-Based.** Like Alberta’s Primary Care Networks, Project Nexus is designed around local needs and guided by community partnerships, fostering shared leadership and evidence-based collaboration to advance integrated, community-focused care. System Efficiency and Better Outcomes. In the long-term, this model will deliver fiscally responsible services with measurable results, focusing on efficiency, reduced duplication, and better outcomes for both people and systems.
- **Single Entry, Multiple Pathways.** Project Nexus functions as an entry point for multiple service streams (housing navigation, health/mental health, employment/training, basic needs) with strong referral mechanisms to services that are hosted, primarily, on site.

³ [Refocusing health care in Alberta | Alberta.ca](#)

⁴ [Action Plan on Homelessness | Alberta.ca](#)

⁵ [HHIC 5 Year Integrated Plan | RedDeer.ca](#)

- Discreet Intake Pathways. Ability to provide discrete intake pathways for single adults, youth, families, Indigenous, etc. Ensures the right services and avoids a “one size fits all” trap.
- Provides the Essentials. A space that provides the basics including hygiene (showers, laundry), storage, food, safety, and security.
- Onsite Assessment. Assessment services that support housing readiness, risk, and service needs that feed into longer-term housing supports.
- Referral and follow-through: Project Nexus must not only refer but also track connection and transition to housing; use outcome metrics (exit to housing, retention).
- Strategic funding & collaborative governance model: Member organizations of Project Nexus will participate in a shared governance framework that enables coordinated, data-informed decision-making. This model ensures transparent resource allocation, collective accountability, and alignment of funding and services toward community-defined outcomes.
- One Site, Shared Data Management. All services operating within Project Nexus will utilize a unified intake and information system, allowing shared data, coordinated referrals, and consistent outcome tracking. This “one door, one record” approach reduces duplication, strengthens accountability, and ensures individuals receive seamless, continuous support across the entire service network. NOTE: it is envisioned that data management not be limited to co-located agencies. Project Nexus could serve as the home for a virtual data management system in the city.
- Multiple Options Along the Continuum. The proposed site has the unique capacity to support emergency shelter and crisis stabilization. This enables Project Nexus to function as both a response centre and a bridge to long-term stability—reducing displacement, streamlining case management, and creating a clear, supported pathway from homelessness to permanent housing.



- **Sense of Community and Belonging.** People experiencing homelessness often face profound social isolation and disconnection from supportive relationships. Project Nexus’s campus-style design intentionally fosters a sense of community, safety, and belonging—key factors in recovery and housing stability. By creating spaces where individuals can rebuild trust, engage with peers, and access wraparound supports in a dignified environment, Project Nexus helps transform homelessness from an experience of exclusion into one of reconnection and healing.

The Experience of Other Hubs

Across North America, integrated or “navigation-centre” models consistently outperform siloed systems. Studies by CMHC, the American Public Works Association, and multiple municipalities confirm:

- Coordinated entry and co-location increase housing placements by 40–70 %.⁶
- 58% exit-to-housing rate within 90 days and a 4:1 public return on investment in health and policing cost reductions.⁷
- 77 % reduction in downtown unsheltered homelessness and ER/police interactions down 27 % after introducing its navigation campus model.⁸
- Housing placements improved by ~50 %, validating integrated, low-barrier intake and co-location principles.⁹
- Integrated Housing First and multi-service models reduce public costs by \$3–\$6 for every \$1 invested, mainly through lower shelter, EMS, and justice-system costs.¹⁰

Integration works because it simplifies the system for people in crisis and for the governments funding it.

Our research led us to a number of groundbreaking organizations already turning this vision into reality — living proof that the model we aspire to build not only works but transforms communities.

Haven for Hope – San Antonio, TX¹¹

The Haven for Hope campus in San Antonio is one of North America’s leading models for integrated homelessness response. Operating on a 22-acre site, it unites more than 50 partner organizations to deliver emergency shelter, transitional housing, healthcare, addictions recovery, education, and employment services—all coordinated through a single intake and data system. This “one-stop” design has reduced unsheltered homelessness downtown by 77 percent and achieved a 90 percent housing retention rate after one year.

Like Haven, the Project Nexus will streamline access, eliminate duplication, and ensure every individual follows a coordinated path from crisis to housing. But it is also tailored to Alberta’s context—aligned with the *Province’s Four-Pillar Health System Reform, Action Plan on Homelessness*, and the *City of Red Deer’s CHHIP plan*—embedding the same integrated, trauma-informed principles within a governance and funding model that fits our regional scale.

In short, Haven for Hope proves that when housing, health, and human services operate side by side, results follow. The Project Nexus will deliver those same outcomes locally: reduced time on the street, faster rehousing, lower system costs, and stronger downtown renewal—a made-in-Alberta version of a proven North American success story.

⁶ American Public Works Association, *Navigation Centre Design Standards* (2022).

⁷ City of Houston, *The Beacon Program Evaluation* (2019).

⁸ Haven for Hope, *Transformational Campus Impact Report* (2018)

⁹ City of Vancouver, *Navigation Centre Pilot Evaluation Summary* (2021)

¹⁰ Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC), *The Cost of Homelessness in Canada* (2023)

¹¹ <https://www.havenforhope.org/>

The Beacon – Houston, TX¹²

The Beacon in Houston, Texas, demonstrates how integrated, client-centred design can transform homelessness systems at a city scale. Operating in partnership with the Coalition for the Homeless and the City of Houston, The Beacon combines a day centre, coordinated-entry hub, and permanent housing navigation all within a single downtown campus. Its “Housing First, Service Rich” approach offers meals, showers, laundry, legal aid, primary healthcare, and case management—every service required to stabilize and rehouse individuals—while maintaining a trauma-informed and dignity-based culture.

The results have been remarkable: more than 58 percent of clients move into permanent housing within 90 days, and chronic homelessness in the Houston region has fallen by over 60 percent since 2011¹³. Public-system data show a 4:1 return on investment, as reduced shelter, emergency, and policing costs more than offset program funding.

Project Nexus builds on these same principles—co-location, coordinated entry, and integrated data—but scales them to Alberta’s mid-sized-city context. Like Houston’s model, Project Nexus will serve as both an access point and a transition platform, ensuring people move seamlessly to housing while aligning with Alberta’s *Action Plan on Homelessness* and *Stronger Foundations Strategy*. By adopting a “made-in-Red Deer” version of The Beacon’s evidence-based model, the community can achieve measurable outcomes: shorter shelter stays, lower public costs, and a clearer path home for a multitude of residents each year.

Gateway Centre – Atlanta, GA¹⁴

The Gateway Center in Atlanta, Georgia, is widely regarded as one of the United States’ most effective examples of a municipally supported, community-operated homelessness hub. Located in the heart of downtown Atlanta, the 95 000 sq ft Gateway campus co-locates more than 20 partner organizations delivering emergency shelter, permanent housing navigation, mental health services, employment training, and family reunification supports. Built on the principle that “homelessness is a temporary condition, not a defining one,” Gateway operates as a 24/7 access point for coordinated entry and individualized case management.

The model has achieved impressive results: more than 40 percent of clients secure employment or stable housing within six months, and community data show a 25 percent decline in homelessness-related police calls since its launch. Gateway’s service coordination reduces duplication across providers and increases accountability—demonstrating that centralized intake and multi-agency co-location yield both fiscal efficiency and human outcomes.

¹² <https://www.beaconhomeless.org/>

¹³ [Coalition for Homelessness of Houston/Harris Country](#)

¹⁴ [Homepage | Gateway Center](#)

Project Nexus is conceptually aligned with Gateway’s model but scaled to Alberta’s population and policy framework. Like Atlanta’s approach, it combines municipal partnership, provincial alignment, and community leadership—integrating health, housing, and human services in one modern facility. Gateway’s success proves that when a city unites its agencies around an integrated, person-centered hub, it doesn’t just manage homelessness—it ends it, one household at a time.

*King Thunderbird Centre – Edmonton, AB*¹⁵

The King Thunderbird Centre in Edmonton—having just opened in December 2025—is Alberta’s most advanced example of a purpose-built, culturally safe integrated homelessness hub. Developed by Boyle Street Community Services in partnership with Alberta Health Services (AHS) and Indigenous Elders, the 80 000 sq ft facility replaces multiple aging sites with a single location that co-locates healthcare, addictions recovery, housing navigation, employment programs, and cultural supports (Boyle Street Community Services, 2024). The design follows GoA’s *Shelter Accommodation Expectations (2024)* directive for “housing-focused, recovery-oriented, and culturally safe service delivery.”

The project is projected to reduce police and emergency calls by 30 percent, shorten time-to-housing by 40 percent, and improve staff coordination through a unified intake and data-management system (Boyle Street Business Case, 2025). These outcomes align directly with Alberta’s *Four-Pillar Health System Reform*—combining Primary Care (on-site nurse practitioners), Mental Health & Addiction (stabilization and recovery spaces), Assisted Living & Social Services (income and housing navigation), and Hospital & Surgical Health Services (ER diversion and discharge coordination).

The Red Deer Integrated Care Hub mirrors this integrated, culturally safe, Alberta-made model—offering a scaled approach that can deliver the same efficiencies for a mid-sized city. Like King Thunderbird, Project Nexus will unite health, housing, and community partners under one roof, embodying the provincial vision of “one system, one team” that bridges social care and healthcare.

The experience of other cities makes one point unmistakably clear: **when communities consolidate services, align governance, and invest in a purpose-built site designed for collaboration, outcomes improve dramatically.** Each of these models—Haven for Hope, The Beacon, Gateway, and King Thunderbird—succeeds because their physical space reinforces their philosophy: one campus, one intake, one coordinated journey home.

¹⁵ [King Thunderbird Centre](#)

The Central Alberta Child Advocacy Centre – Red Deer, AB¹⁶

We don't have to look hundreds or thousands of miles away to find proof that an integrated, co-located service model can work — we have one right here in our own backyard. The Central Alberta Child Advocacy Centre (CACAC) is living evidence that when community partners, government, and law enforcement align under one roof, outcomes improve, duplication disappears, and lives change. It shows that Red Deer not only understands the theory of a “hub” model — it has already built and sustained one of Alberta's most effective examples of collaborative care.

Since its opening in 2017, the CACAC has transformed how Central Alberta responds to child sexual abuse and exploitation. Working side by side, the RCMP, Alberta Health Services, Children's Services, Victim Services, and mental-health clinicians share a single trauma-informed space designed to minimize further harm to children. Instead of forcing families to navigate multiple agencies, the Centre provides a seamless, coordinated process that integrates investigation, treatment, and long-term support. Over the past year alone, CACAC has facilitated 464 child forensic interviews from 133 communities and delivered more than 10 000 supports since inception — clear evidence that a shared-service model achieves both efficiency and compassion¹⁷.

The success of CACAC demonstrates that Red Deer already has the expertise, partnerships, and infrastructure to make a larger-scale hub model work. Its partnership with Red Deer Polytechnic and its role in the Sheldon Kennedy Centre of Excellence¹⁸ show the community's ability to bring agencies together around shared purpose, shared space, and shared accountability. Project Nexus extends this proven local model beyond child advocacy to adults and families experiencing homelessness — a natural evolution of what Central Alberta already does best: integrating services, aligning systems, and delivering dignity through collaboration.

Red Deer now has the opportunity to replicate this concept for homelessness. By selecting the right location—accessible, safe, and adaptable for co-located services—the community can translate these lessons into local action. The following section outlines the site best positioned to anchor this transformation: a place where Red Deer's partners can turn shared vision into measurable results.

¹⁶ [Central Alberta Child Advocacy Centre](#)

¹⁷ Ibid.

¹⁸ [Centre of Excellence • Central Alberta Child Advocacy Centre](#)

The Site

Over the past several years, the City of Red Deer has worked closely with the Government of Alberta to identify and secure a suitable location for a permanent, purpose-built shelter. The Province first allocated capital funding in 2019 to support construction of a new facility, affirming the community’s need for a modern, integrated site that could provide more than temporary emergency shelter capacity.¹⁹ Since that time, the City has led a thorough and transparent site-selection process, evaluating more than 130 potential properties across multiple phases of public consultation and technical review.²⁰ While several sites advanced to consideration, challenges such as neighbourhood compatibility, infrastructure readiness, and evolving community priorities have made consensus difficult.²¹ In early 2024, Council announced that the fourth proposed site would not proceed after cost and fit assessments determined it was no longer viable.²²

Year	Milestone	Summary / Outcome
2019	Provincial Funding Commitment	Government of Alberta earmarks \$7 million for construction of a permanent, purpose-built shelter in Red Deer.
2020–2022	Initial Site Reviews	City identifies and evaluates dozens of potential sites; engagement begins with community and partner agencies.
2022	Expansion of Search Criteria	More than 130 properties assessed for infrastructure readiness, zoning, and service integration potential.
2023	Public Engagement and Feasibility Studies	City releases <i>History of Permanent Shelter</i> report summarizing technical and community feedback; commitment to transparency reaffirmed.
2024 (March)	Fourth Site Review Ends	Council discontinues negotiations for the fourth proposed location after cost and fit analyses show limited feasibility.
2025 → Forward	Shared Commitment to an Integrated Model	Both the City and Province remain committed to achieving a purpose-built, recovery-oriented facility that meets Government of Alberta’s <i>Shelter Accommodation Expectations (2024)</i> and the City’s <i>CHHIP</i> objectives.

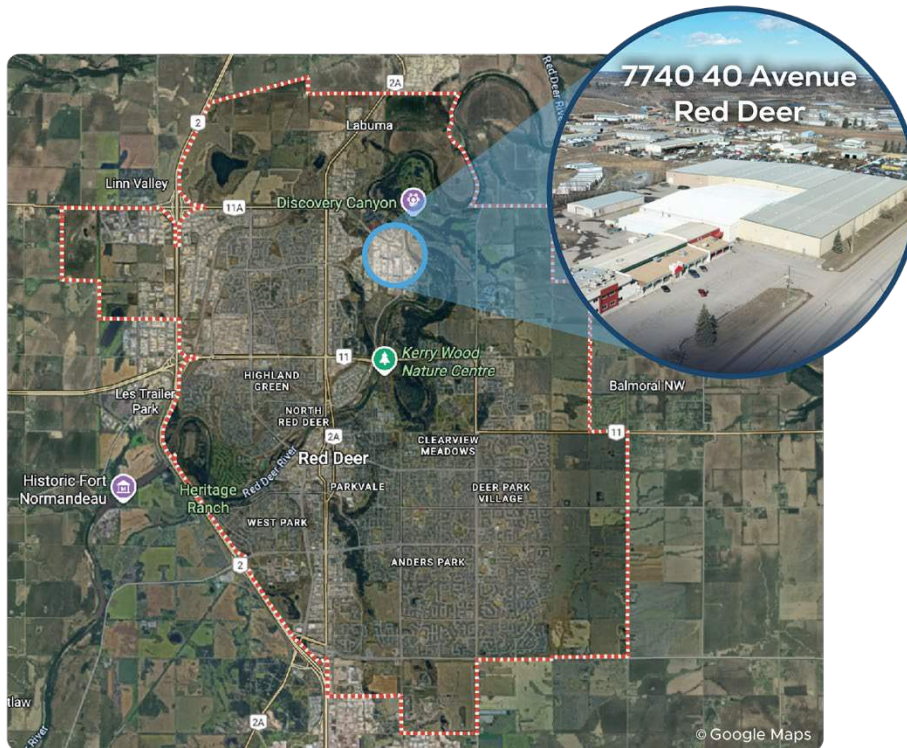
Despite these challenges, both orders of government remain aligned on the end goal: establishing a purpose-built, recovery-oriented facility that reflects Alberta’s *Shelter Accommodation Expectations (2024)* and the City’s *Community Housing and Homelessness Integrated Plan (CHHIP)*. The proposed Red Deer Integrated Care Hub builds upon this shared foundation. By leveraging an existing, service-ready site at 7740 40 Avenue, Project Nexus can deliver the integrated model envisioned for years—transforming temporary responses into permanent solutions while honouring the City’s leadership and the Province’s longstanding financial commitment.

¹⁹ Government of Alberta, *Budget 2019 Highlights – Infrastructure Investments (2019)*: announced \$7 million for Red Deer’s permanent homeless shelter project.

²⁰ City of Red Deer, *History of Permanent Shelter – Full Report (2023)*: outlines the evaluation of 130 potential sites.

²¹ City of Red Deer, *Permanent Shelter Public Engagement Summary (2023)*: identifies infrastructure and community-integration challenges.

²² Jenna Crosby, “Cost Prohibitive: City of Red Deer Moves On from Fourth Different Shelter Site,” *Red Deer Advocate*, March 18, 2024. <https://reddeeradvocate.com/2024/03/18/cost-prohibitive-city-of-red-deer-moves-on-from-fourth-different-shelter-site/>



Site Strengths

The proposed site at **7740 40 Avenue** presents a rare and strategic opportunity to deliver on Red Deer’s long-standing vision for an integrated community hub. Unlike previous locations, this property combines the size, layout, and adaptability needed to co-locate housing, health, and human services within a single, purpose-designed campus. Its existing infrastructure allows for timely activation at a lower cost than new construction, while its location provides both accessibility and appropriate separation from residential and commercial sensitivities. Collectively, these attributes position 7740 40 Avenue as the most practical, cost-effective, and policy-aligned option to achieve a truly integrated model of care in Central Alberta.

Key strengths of the 7740 40 Avenue site include:

- **Purpose-Built Scale and Capacity:** The Campus offers over 200,000 square feet of adaptable space large enough to bring essential supports together in one place, making it easier for people to get help and move forward. The campus will include emergency shelter, health and mental health care, recovery-focused supports, housing intake, and navigation, Indigenous-led and culturally informed services, employment and life-skills supports, and access to basic needs like food, showers, laundry, and secure storage. By coordinating services on one site, Project Nexus reduces barriers, shortens the path to housing, and helps people stabilize faster—strengthening safety, efficiency, and wellbeing for the entire community.
- **Gender-Specific Safety & Supports.** The scale and layout of the campus allow for distinct, purpose-designed spaces for women and men, couples, families, and those with pets ensuring dedicated sleeping areas, program rooms, and healing environments that enhance safety, reduce trauma triggers, and support individualized care. This separation—while still part of a coordinated, integrated campus—aligns with best practices in shelter design and strengthens pathways to stability and long-term housing.
- **Immediate Availability and Cost Efficiency:** Repurposing existing infrastructure aligns with Alberta’s *Affordable Housing Asset Management Framework (2022)*, which prioritizes the use of existing properties and integrated developments to minimize new capital expenditures.
- **Policy and Funding Alignment:** Project Nexus delivers on multiple Government of Alberta priorities — *Stronger Foundations (2021)*, *Action Plan on Homelessness (2024)*, and the *Four-Pillar Health System Reform (2025)* — by physically integrating health, housing, and social supports under one roof.
- **Community Readiness:** The property’s zoning and surrounding land-use context are compatible with institutional or mixed-service functions, reducing the rezoning risks that have delayed previous permanent shelter proposals.
- **Transit Connectivity.** The City of Red Deer currently offers transit service to the south entrance of the property²³. This route may require schedule or routing adjustments to ensure reliable access, particularly during overnight hours, however, we feel believe that the City of Red Deer would be a willing partner given the compelling nature of this concept.

²³ [Route18 - City of Red Deer Transit](#)

- Infrastructure and Servicing. Preliminary review suggests adequate utilities, traffic flow, stormwater, and parking configuration based on the previous occupant of the site; however, these details will be confirmed through City engineering and building-permit processes.
- Operational Synergy and Governance: The Red Deer Homeless Foundation can serve as on-site operator under a Policy Governance® framework, ensuring transparent accountability and alignment with the City, AHS, and Indigenous partners.
- Proven Economic and Social Return: Consolidating services at this site will generate a projected 4–5: 1 return on investment, reduce ER and policing calls by 20–30 %, and catalyze downtown renewal similar to Haven for Hope’s \$70 million neighbourhood revitalization in San Antonio.
- Resolution to Long-Standing Site Challenges: After the City’s review of more than 130 sites and four withdrawn proposals, 7740 40 Avenue presents a feasible, and we believe, community-supportable alternative that operationalizes the MOU signed between the Province and the City in 2019.
- Downtown Revitalization Catalyst. Relocating core shelter services to the Project Nexus campus at 7740 40 Avenue will immediately relieve visible homelessness, public concern, and service congestion downtown—restoring confidence among businesses, investors, visitors, and residents. This shift frees downtown spaces to be re-purposed for housing, commerce, culture, and public life, directly advancing the City’s Downtown Activation Strategy. Comparable cities like San Antonio and Houston demonstrate that moving fragmented services into an integrated campus can reduce visible homelessness by 70–80% and drive double-digit growth in downtown investment within just a few years.
- Economic and Social Return. The Project Nexus campus will generate substantial fiscal and community benefits. By consolidating housing, health, and social services on one campus, Red Deer can reduce emergency response, policing, and hospital use—saving an estimated \$4–6 million annually. Results from cities like San Antonio and Houston show that every public dollar invested in integrated campuses can yield \$4–\$6 in return through cost avoidance and economic renewal. Beyond the financial impact, Project Nexus strengthens community safety, eases pressure on downtown businesses and rebuilds public confidence in Red Deer’s capacity to lead with compassion and accountability.
- Social Enterprise & Career Pathways. The campus can support a range of social enterprise activities that draw on the skills residents already have while helping them build new ones. Select programs may involve Red Deer Polytechnic for formal training, while others can be community- or resident-led. These enterprises provide meaningful work experience, modest mission-aligned revenue, and a practical bridge out of poverty—reinforcing dignity, purpose, and a “*hand up, not a handout*” approach. By building readiness to transition from the facility as quickly as possible, Project Nexus helps individuals move into stable housing and re-establish themselves as contributing members of the community.
- Move the corridors off the streets and into a safe, coordinated environment. Our social service system currently operates through long “corridors” created by waiting, paperwork, geography, transportation, and coordination gaps—keeping people moving between services instead of toward housing. By bringing services together on one integrated campus, we eliminate these corridors, reduce system strain, and help people get housed sooner, benefiting the entire community.

- A community asset, not a closed campus. While it provides coordinated supports for people experiencing homelessness, many services on site are intentionally accessible to the broader community. Health care, housing navigation, employment and life-skills training, English as a Second Language supports, and other prevention-focused services are envisioned to be available to neighbours, workers, families, and local businesses—not only those staying on campus. By opening access to the services that help people succeed, Project Nexus strengthens the entire community, reduces duplication across systems, eases pressure on emergency services, and helps challenges be addressed early—before they escalate into crisis or homelessness.

While 7740 40 Avenue offers clear advantages as a campus location, it also presents practical considerations that warrant attention. Its size, adaptability, and placement outside the downtown core make it both a strength and a challenge. Proactively addressing access, neighbourhood integration, and retrofit requirements will be essential to realizing the site’s full potential.

Site Drawbacks

The following outlines the primary considerations associated with 7740 40 Avenue and identifies strategies to ensure these challenges are effectively managed.

- **Perception of Distance from Core Services.** While the site’s location provides privacy and accessibility by vehicle, it sits outside the downtown core where many outreach agencies and existing service providers are currently concentrated. The first priority of Project Nexus is to work closely with agencies and partners to create a compelling value proposition that brings services onto the campus as quickly as possible. While a short transition period is recognized, the objective is rapid co-location to minimize service fragmentation, shorten system corridors, and accelerate the benefits of an integrated campus.
- **Public Perception and Neighbourhood Sensitivity.** Although the area’s zoning is more compatible than previous downtown proposals, community engagement will be essential. Some nearby tenants may initially express concern over clientele, security, or traffic impacts; however early communication, development of protocols, and design transparency will help mitigate any concerns.
- **Capital Retrofit Requirements.** The 202,625 sq. ft. facility, while ideally sized, is not yet configured for trauma-informed or residential shelter use. Renovations and code upgrades—such as fire separation, HVAC zoning, and medical or dormitory standards—will be required, adding to capital costs. While retrofit work is required, those costs are more than offset by the decision to repurpose an existing building rather than acquire land and build new, delivering meaningful savings on a cost-per-square-foot basis.
- **Operating Model Complexity.** Co-locating multiple agencies on one site will require a formal governance and lease structure, clear security protocols, and robust data-sharing agreements. These add administrative complexity that must be resourced up-front, however, over the long-term, these investments will be offset by cost-savings from shared administrative or operational areas.

Every major community project carries challenges, and Project Nexus is no exception. Yet in this case, the strengths of 7740 40 Avenue far outweigh the drawbacks. The site is not simply available—it is strategically located, financially prudent, and operationally aligned with both provincial frameworks and local readiness. It represents the most practical, cost-effective, and policy-supported path to finally deliver the integrated campus that Red Deer has envisioned for years—one that transforms an enduring challenge into a lasting community asset.

Site Acquisition

A group of local entrepreneurs and community leaders have stepped forward to secure the 7740 40 Avenue property from its current owner, ensuring the site remains available for development of Project Nexus. Their intent is to safeguard this strategic opportunity while the Red Deer Homeless Foundation, the Province of Alberta, and community partners finalize funding, zoning, and operational frameworks. In doing so, they have expressed a willingness to structure an ownership transition that aligns with both public and non-profit needs, reflecting the spirit of public-private partnership that underpins many of Red Deer’s most successful community projects such as the Central Alberta Child Advocacy Centre, The Red Deer Hospital, The Red Deer Hospice, Red Deer Polytechnic and so many more. This initiative demonstrates both local business confidence and civic commitment—clear evidence that the Red Deer community is prepared to share ownership of the solution.

An offer to purchase has now been placed on the property, subject to a 90-day due-diligence period to allow for technical assessments, financing arrangements, partner consultations, and completion of the rezoning process. Under the proposed terms, closing would occur 30 days after conditions are removal, positioning the project for possession as soon as April 2026. This timeline allows for design and retrofit work to begin in early 2026 and the phased co-location of partner agencies later that year. The proactive actions of these community leaders provide the stability and momentum needed to transform a long-standing vision into a shovel-ready, collaborative reality.

Preliminary Projected Impact

Project Nexus is a purpose-built, multi-service centre designed to strengthen Alberta’s homelessness, health, and recovery systems. By consolidating shelter, medical, mental health, housing navigation, and partner-agency services under one roof, Project Nexus directly supports the Government of Alberta’s shift toward integrated, outcome-driven delivery. Its design and operating model align closely with provincial mandate priorities across Assisted Living and Social Services, Primary and Preventative Health, and Mental Health and Addiction.

While early planning has been intentionally conservative and based on early-stage evaluation, the emerging model reflects strong alignment with provincial priorities and demonstrable best practices from comparative jurisdictions.

Assisted Living and Social Services

- Implements the provincial direction to fund service providers directly (2025–26)
- Strengthens the housing-focused & recovery-oriented shelter system.
- Advances coordinated access and reduces system fragmentation.

Primary and Preventative Health Services

- Reduces emergency room utilization by offering 24/7 medical triage.
- Improves continuity between acute care, EMS, and community services.
- Supports rural and Indigenous access to primary health care.

Mental Health & Addiction

- Operationalizes the Alberta Recovery Model
- Creates a reliable pathway from street use → stabilization → treatment → recovery housing.
- Reduces risk and crisis interactions that lead to EMS and justice involvement.

Stronger Foundations Housing Strategy

- Reduces pressure on affordable housing waitlists.
- Improves placement rates into long-term housing.
- Supports tenants in maintaining housing stability.

Impact Domain	Baseline (Current State)	Projected 3–5 Year Impact	Rationale
Visible Homelessness	Highly visible unsheltered population; increasing calls for service; business impacts (estimated 150–200 chronic homelessness)	60–80% reduction in visible street homelessness within 24–36 months of opening	Hub provides 140+ beds (wet/dry), 500+ daily services; low-barrier access; integrated case management; intentional diversion from downtown through transportation, on-site services, and day programming.
Emergency Shelter System Pressure	Current shelter capacity <100 beds; overflow unmanaged; inconsistent medical supports	Eliminates overflow, stabilizes supply with 200+ beds; supports medical + mental health triage	Wet + dry shelter capacity directly addresses gap of 65–115 beds identified in business plan; medical center prevents unnecessary shelter cycling.
Healthcare Utilization & Costs	\$2.5M annual cost to EMS and ER from chronic homelessness	30–50% reduction in avoidable ER visits and EMS responses (approx. \$1M–\$1.3M annual savings)	24/7 medical center, harm reduction, wound care, chronic disease management, withdrawal support reduce high-cost emergency usage.
Police & Justice System Use	\$1.8M annual policing costs (calls for service, arrests, court time)	25–40% reduction in policing demand (\$450k–\$700k annual savings)	Co-located RCMP/security station, de-escalation on-site, stabilization services, and reduction of street disorder downtown.
Social Services & Crisis System Costs	\$1.2M annual crisis-driven interventions	20–35% reduction in demand for emergency placements, crisis beds, short-term interventions	Integrated case management and coordinated partner agencies reduce duplication and improve upstream intervention.
Economic Impact on Downtown Businesses	~\$500k annual negative economic drag (reduced foot traffic, vandalism, cleanup, safety concerns)	Reverses economic drag, generating \$750k–\$1.5M in increased economic activity	Restores business confidence; reduces negative street activity; increases downtown desirability for investment and customers.
Housing Placements & Stability	Fragmented system; long wait times; limited exit to housing	150–250 housing placements annually once fully operational; 60–70% 12-month retention	Coordinated delivery of housing services, case plans, ID support, benefits navigation, landlord relations.

Impact Domain	Baseline (Current State)	Projected 3–5 Year Impact	Rationale
Employment & Income Outcomes	Basic referrals only; no integrated programming	200+ clients per year complete skills programming; 100+ gain employment or work experience	Dedicated Skills Hub, social enterprise employment pathways, employer partnerships.
Indigenous Service Integration	Overrepresentation of Indigenous peoples (approx. 45% of homeless population)	Culturally grounded services, improved equity outcomes, more effective care pathways	Indigenous partners on-site; cultural supports; healing programs; improved data and outcomes tracking.
Cost of Homelessness to Community	Approx. \$6 million per year across systems	\$2.5–\$3.5 million annual avoided system costs by Year 5	Based on reductions in EMS/ER, policing, jail stays, shelters, and crisis services via consolidated and effective service delivery.
Workforce & Community Stability	Employers face labour shortages + instability	Increased workforce participation; improved community safety, fewer disruptions	Employment services + reduced disorder support business retention and recruitment.
System Coordination & Efficiency	“Amazing people in an inefficient system” (Chamber report)	Single coordinated system, unified data, reduced duplication, unified intake & case management	Co-location of 15–20 agencies and a common care plan structure.
Financial Sustainability of Hub	Capital + operating costs unclear in existing model	18–24 month break-even through revenue diversification (per business plan)	Rental revenue from partners, grants, social enterprise income, operational efficiencies, philanthropic investment.
Community Confidence & Social Cohesion	Mistrust, safety concerns, stigma	Improved public confidence, safer public spaces, visible progress	Reduced street disorder, visible pathways to recovery, clear metrics, and improved neighbourhood relationships.

Summary

Project Nexus represents a **once-in-a-generation opportunity** to transform how Red Deer responds to homelessness. Built on two years of coordinated community research, Project Nexus aligns perfectly with Alberta’s Action Plan on Homelessness (2024), Stronger Foundations (2021), Affordable Housing Partnership Program, and Four-Pillar Health System Reform (2025).

At its core, Project Nexus converts a single 202,625 sq. ft. facility at 7740 40 Avenue into a unified campus where emergency shelter, health and mental health care, recovery-focused supports, housing intake and navigation, Indigenous-led and culturally informed services, employment and life-skills supports, will be available, and in addition, access to basic needs like food, showers, laundry, and secure storage.

By coordinating services on one site, Project Nexus reduces barriers, shortens the path to housing, and helps people stabilize faster—strengthening safety, efficiency, and wellbeing for the entire community.”

This evidence-based approach—proven in cities such as San Antonio, Houston, Atlanta, and Edmonton—has demonstrated 60–80 % reductions in visible homelessness, multi-million-dollar public-system savings, and measurable downtown revitalization.

The site itself offers unmatched readiness: large, service-adaptable space; established infrastructure; strong transit access; and compatibility with the City’s Community Housing and Homelessness Integrated Plan (CHHIP). By repurposing an existing structure, the project avoids the cost of new construction and delivers exceptional value for money. While renovations will be required to meet trauma-informed and residential codes, these investments are offset by substantial long-term savings and operational efficiencies.

Local entrepreneurs are actively securing the site to preserve it for public-sector partnership, with an accepted offer to purchase and a 90-day due-diligence period targeting possession as early as April 2026. The intent is for the property to be donated to the Red Deer Homeless Foundation, ensuring long-term community ownership, public benefit, and ongoing capital to support the development of permanent in the community. This community-led approach exemplifies Alberta’s public-private partnership that combines local investment, shared responsibility, and readiness to act.

Through this project, Red Deer will deliver an integrated, recovery-oriented model that meets provincial expectations for housing-focused, culturally safe shelter operations while catalyzing a renaissance in the downtown core. By consolidating services in one coordinated location, Project Nexus will reduce homelessness, lower policing and emergency costs, and boost public confidence in Red Deer’s capacity for innovation, compassion, and fiscal discipline.