



MEDIA RELEASE

Thursday, November 6, 2025

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

City addresses Milligan's Pond encampment following second fire in two weeks

Barrie Fire has responded to nearly 30 fires at encampments in the last 6 months

(Barrie, ON) – Today, the City of Barrie, in collaboration with the County of Simcoe took coordinated action to address the encampment at [Audrey Milligan Park & Pond](#) (Milligan's Pond). These efforts are focused on providing individuals with alternate shelter and support, while ensuring public safety and restoring the natural area.

Barrie Fire and Emergency Services responded to a large fire last night at Milligan's Pond, making it the second fire at the site in the last 2 weeks.

"Fires in encampments pose a serious risk to the people living there, as well as to nearby properties and first responders," said Eric MacFadden, Deputy Fire Chief. "Encampments like the one at Milligan's Pond tend to have a number of hazardous materials on site. Open flames and makeshift heating devices create a high risk of fires spreading quickly. When our Fire crews got on scene last night, the Fire was about 60 feet by 30 feet."

Despite the fire last night, the City continued its work with community partners today to support the transition of individuals from the Milligan's Pond encampment to shelter.

"It's incredibly sad to see a place that I used to walk through to see swans, beaver dams, and all the beautiful things the outdoors had to offer turn into a place of encampment where suspected arson and crime is happening," said Mayor Alex Nuttall. "We are thankful that no one was injured in the recent fire. Fires like these put lives in danger and destroy the natural spaces our community values. We are working every day with our partners to connect people to shelter, support, and safety, because no one should be living in these conditions. We are here to help if you want help. If not, it is time to move on and allow this area to be restored for the safety of everyone."

The encampment situated throughout Milligan's Pond has presented health risks and environmental challenges. Through consistent outreach and collaboration with the County of Simcoe, the City has successfully transitioned a number of individuals indoors to safe accommodations and is starting the work of cleaning up the natural environment. The cleanup at Milligan's Pond will take weeks, and the park will be closed to the public until further notice.

Earlier this week, the County of Simcoe announced a 40-bed modular home facility is expected to open in the coming weeks that will ease system and capacity pressures for those living unsheltered in Barrie. The modular building will immediately be utilized to support the County of Simcoe's winter response strategy; providing a 24/7 40 bed program for those currently living unsheltered. This supportive bridge housing program will also provide 24/7 on-site supports and services for unsheltered individuals to secure sustainable and permanent housing outcomes.

Mayor Alex Nuttall declared a State of Emergency on September 9 to address encampments across the City of Barrie as the number and size continued to grow and cause significant risk and harm. For more information and updates on the City's approach to addressing encampments, visit barrie.ca/AddressingEncampments.



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