

## A Better Tent City Living Report

Final Round Table Session List of Generated Questions of concern for the future of a Better Tent City



## Round Table

A generative collective  
round table question period  
about the future of

### A BETTER TENT CITY

In the midst of a Climate  
Emergency and Global Flu  
Pandemic with a  
commitment to Housing  
First to be complete by 2030  
Incidentally, at the same time  
as a 50% reduction in our  
carbon footprint.

How are we going to do  
**THAT!**

## You ask?

**By Heather Majaury B.A. B.A.A. Ed. M.A.**

ABTC Documenter & Navigator funded by KW Community Foundation



Social Development Centre  
WATERLOO REGION



KITCHENER  
WATERLOO  
COMMUNITY  
FOUNDATION

Emergency  
Community  
Support Fund

# Questions Facilitator's Preamble

- The final session of the day long conference, documenting the evolution of **A Better Tent City** as part of our responsibilities to our funders the Kitchener Waterloo Community Foundation was just shy of an hour long.
- Participants and attendees of the day who could remain did so along with a curated group of insiders to the project including project planners, workers, and volunteers
- We also invited many individuals from various agencies government offices, and institutions who are considered people with influence and responsibility toward the housing system in this region to be present. Obviously more could have attended but there were several people who remained and contributed to this session

# Questions Our Intention

- The purpose of this particular session was to address that while we were coming on the close of a particular phase of this pilot project this innovation in how we relate to and serve people experiencing the trauma of homelessness is precarious unless many questions are addressed and answered but also to focus the attendees on the future of a Better Tent City and not simply a job well done where people pat themselves on the back and change very little in the systems that impact people who are homeless or who are dangerously close to homelessness or who's fundamental human rights to housing are being compromised by property speculation that does not seem to have any reasonable containment. Perhaps the free market which is not free at all is not always the best replacement for regulations that protect people and shared concerns from exploitation, abuse, humiliation, and discrimination for the profits of a few and the expense of everyone else.
- It is intended to leave a doorway open to a future of commitments that go beyond just another project that got some funding to make various chains of command look good but do very little to shift the inertia of fear or the myths that addiction is a criminal problem and not a health problem.
- These questions are not intended to provide answers these questions are intended to inspire actions that protect a Better Tent City from being yet another good idea left on the scrap heap of neo liberal economic and political management without anyone coming forward to secure the sustainable needs of this project until a time when perhaps due to our collective compassion that everyone has an affordable accessible attainable supportive environment to call home on their own terms with access to basic city essential services like a way to go to the bathroom and somewhere to have a shower and to not have to choose housing over food. And to be able to manage and deal with health issues with dignity and in a timely fashion.
- Until then consider the people at a Better Tent City are a community. They are a neighbourhood. And they are home.
- If we are all in this together during COVID 19 then I think it is reasonable to let no one be left behind when it comes to housing. Do you?



# Questions

## A warning about feelings

- Some people may call this a trigger warning
- I like to think of it as a warning that you might experience feelings you were not prepared for by reading these questions or watching these videos. These might be strong emotions that cause you to have a response that surprises you or you may strongly be offended or disagree with the way a questions was structured. Or there may be assumptions that upset you that you think are underlying a question. You might be right. You might be wrong.
- There are more questions than these that need to be asked and some questions may be determined to not be relevant or useful for A Better Tent City.
- You are in control of your responses, or opinions, and your actions. Do whatever it is that you need to do for your well being.
- If you feel motivated to support A Better Tent City or get involved in efforts that will help A Better Tent City reach its next goals don't isolate yourself connect by contacting The Social Development Centre at or Laura Hamilton at or Nadine at

# Questions

## The Medicine Wheel Clusters

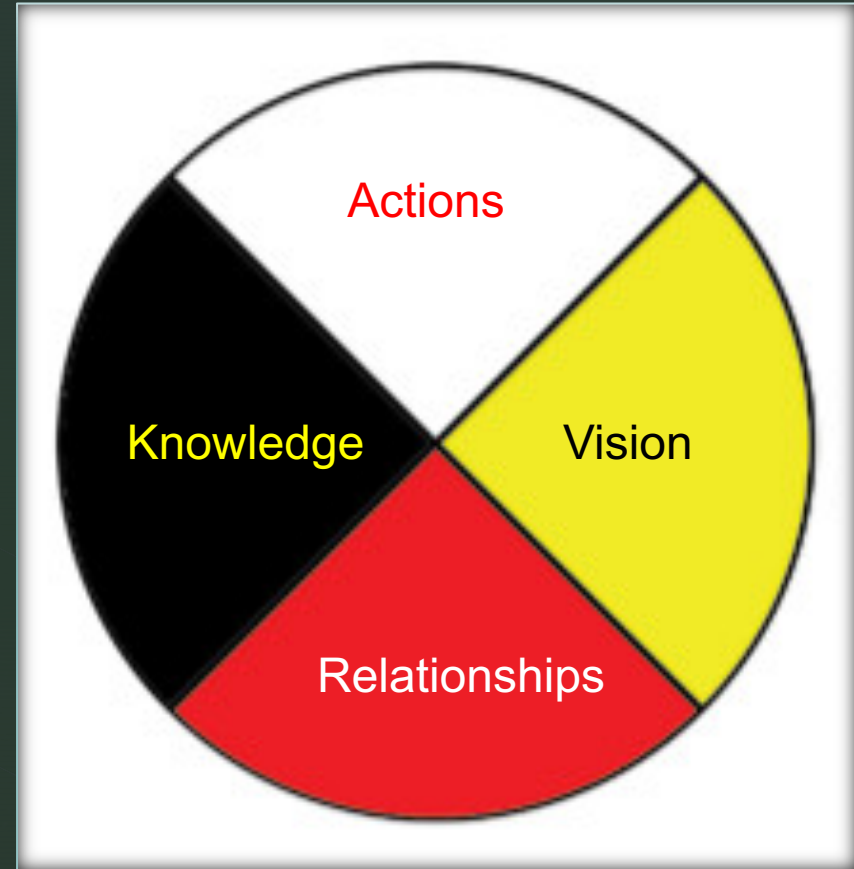
- As an Anishinaabekwe I will not divorce my ways of understanding the world from my ways of facilitating, researching, and organizing community because I happen to think they are really useful methods in finding answers to questions and to find ways to work across difference. From my education and training as an Aboriginal Adult Educator and from my lived experience with ceremony connected to Anishinaabeg world views, epistemologies, societal organizing, spirituality, and wholistic approaches to problem solving and learning I am offering you a variation on the medicine wheel as I have come to know it for clustering the questions of this session and ordering them into a new form that will help this project and its funders work together to generate meaning and pathways forward together.
- This structure is not comprehensive. It reflects the contributions of the participants of this workshop collectively. For the actual workshop you may watch the video or request a transcript or sound file of the audio. It is my hope you will consider that this is a project that should continue and will do so as questions are answered and new questions generated.
- Housing and homelessness are not a one-time phenomenon. it is the direct result of decisions people in power make all the way up several food chains across and over time. The survival of A Better Tent City and achieving Housing For All is something we all must lend our particular questions, abilities, skills and resources to for this very special moment in time in Block 2 of the Haldimand tract also known as Waterloo Region to flourish and lead the way in transitional housing and creating supported neighbourhoods that will make a difference for real.
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=VQtMGpeYMP4>



# Questions Intent and Applications

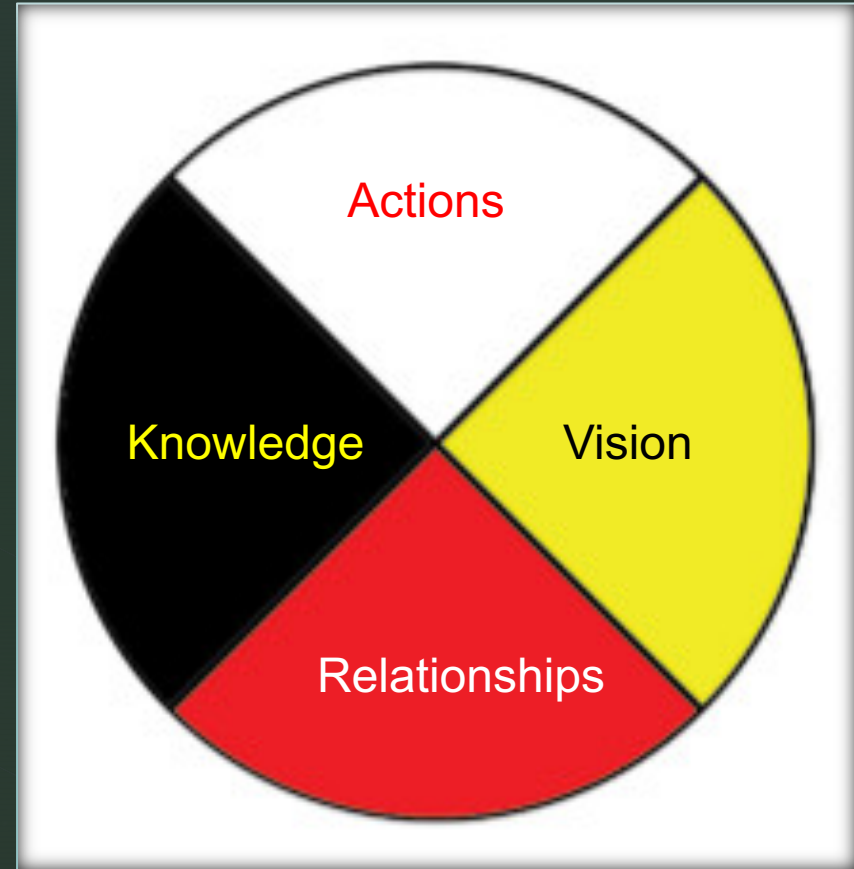
- This brainstorming session generated questions that apply in many ways to the ongoing sustainability and success of A Better Tent City to survive as a community that will evolve into a potential neighbourhood with special needs within our region. They also pinpoint a moment in time where short term funding is ending.
- This report explains from lived experience what is not being done to ensure Housing is a Human Right in our municipality and highlights the barriers, gaps, believes, social and economic challenges of this project that deserves to be supported beyond an experimental pilot project.
- This is about the survival of people in a region within a seven-year housing waiting list and a ten-year plan to build enough affordable, accessible, and supportive housing to meet the actual need. We need interim stop gap actions that mean no one is left behind. We need transitional housing for people who are contending with a myriad of health problems along with the trauma of homelessness who cannot fit into the band aids we currently have in place.
- Use these questions to inspire you to envisioning more inclusive and humane city planning, to actively generate the relationships we need to lower fear and challenge assumed norms and outcomes, let these questions tell us what we don't know but we can find out and who to find out from, and finally let these questions motivate us all to better actions to protect and allow A Better Tent City to find it's Home within Waterloo Region.
- These questions can be used to start many conversations in many different contexts to move this project forward. Right now, this project is in danger of not being able to survive intact without a willing landlord or a gift of land from the municipality. Simple, sad, and wrong. Consider funders how your good distributions are not being valued by political institutions if this becomes the case.

# Clusters

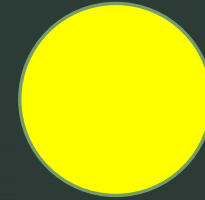




# Vision

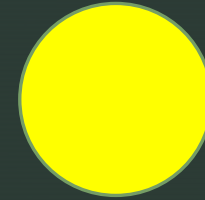






If I had a magic wand what would help today?



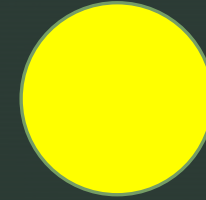


How do you continue the community's style and interactions as people move to more stable housing?



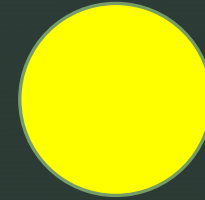
Could there be free medical and psychological support  
for A Better Tent City?



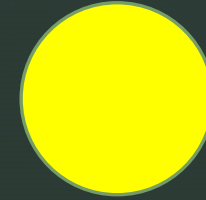


How can A Better Tent City be replicated?

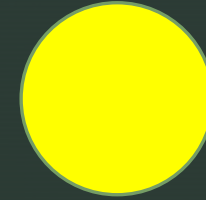




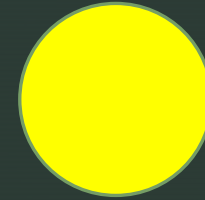
Why would we want A Better Tent City?  
And why would it be preferable to other forms of  
supportive housing or shelter systems?



And how do we not make A Better Tent City do everything?

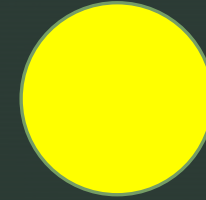


How do we lower our carbon footprint?

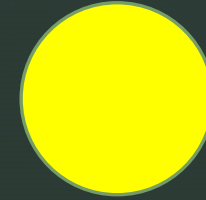


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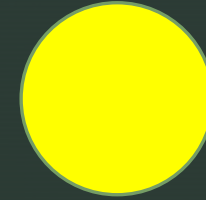




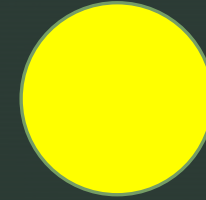
Can we build A Better Tent City that includes kids with all the facilities that kids need?



When will we get safe supply?

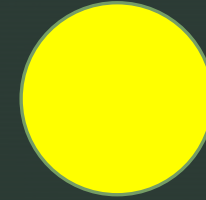


And how do we balance the needs of different people  
who are experiencing homelessness?

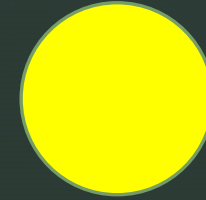


How do we have no goals?

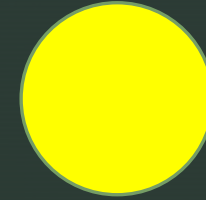




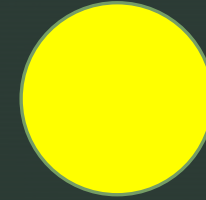
How do we put lived experience at the forefront?



How do we not limit ourselves to our goals how do we  
continue expanding the goals?



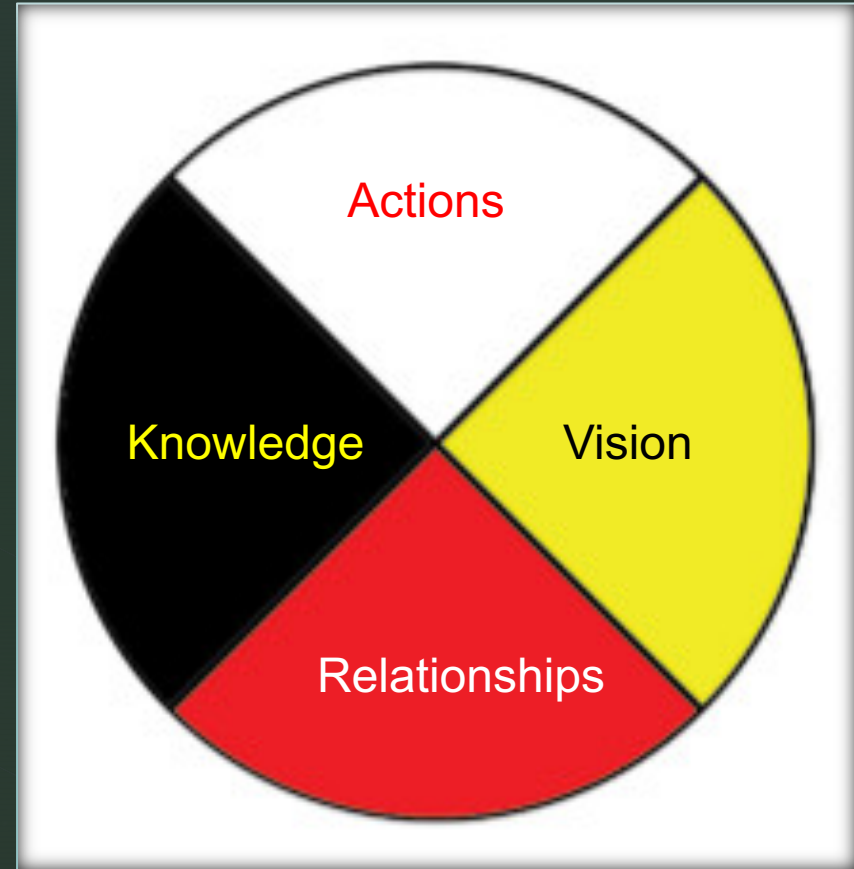
What should the community room be like? You have a roof. You have some food. Washroom. What else?  
Should there be a community room?



At what point do we stop calling it A Better Tent City  
and start calling it just a regular neighborhood?



Knowledge





How do we know when we've reached our goal?





How can a better tent city find new land for their community?





What is the ideal size of a community like  
A Better Tent City?





What can be done to have less people in need of Tent Cities from a mental health viewpoint, or from an addiction viewpoint?



How do we balance different perspectives?



How do we change people's mindsets  
and reduce stigma?



Who are the current partners to help  
A Better Tent City?

What if any resources could be shared?



How do we encourage more rule breaking?





What's wrong with the way that we do housing normally  
that we need A Better Tent City?

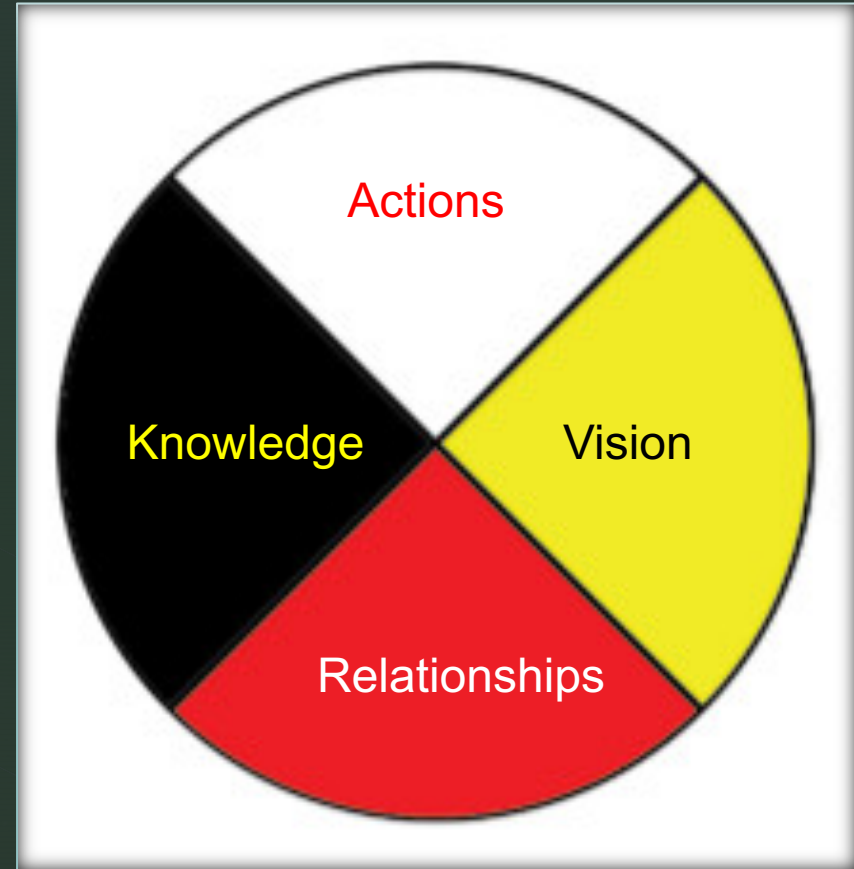


Do we have an assumption  
that we need bigger homes?



Where can we get more land?

# Actions

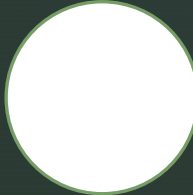





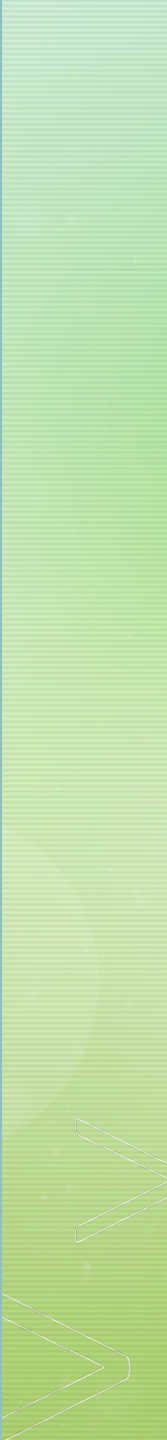
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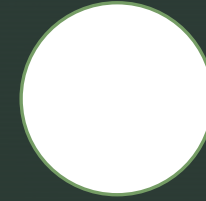




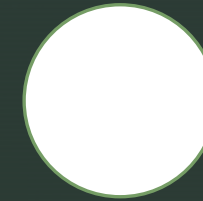


How can I use my new knowledge and passion about  
this ABTC community to be the change?

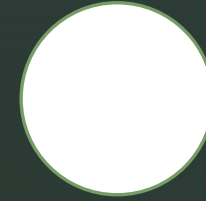




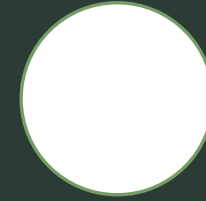
How can A Better Tent City find new land?



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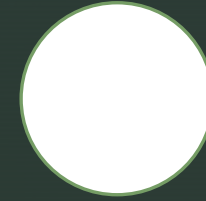
How do we support the people there to break the rules if we're not directly like giving our land?



How can A Better Tent City raise money?

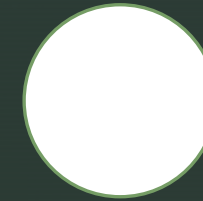




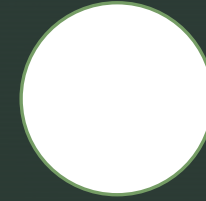


Can we instigate change beyond being at the whims of  
benefactors and charity?





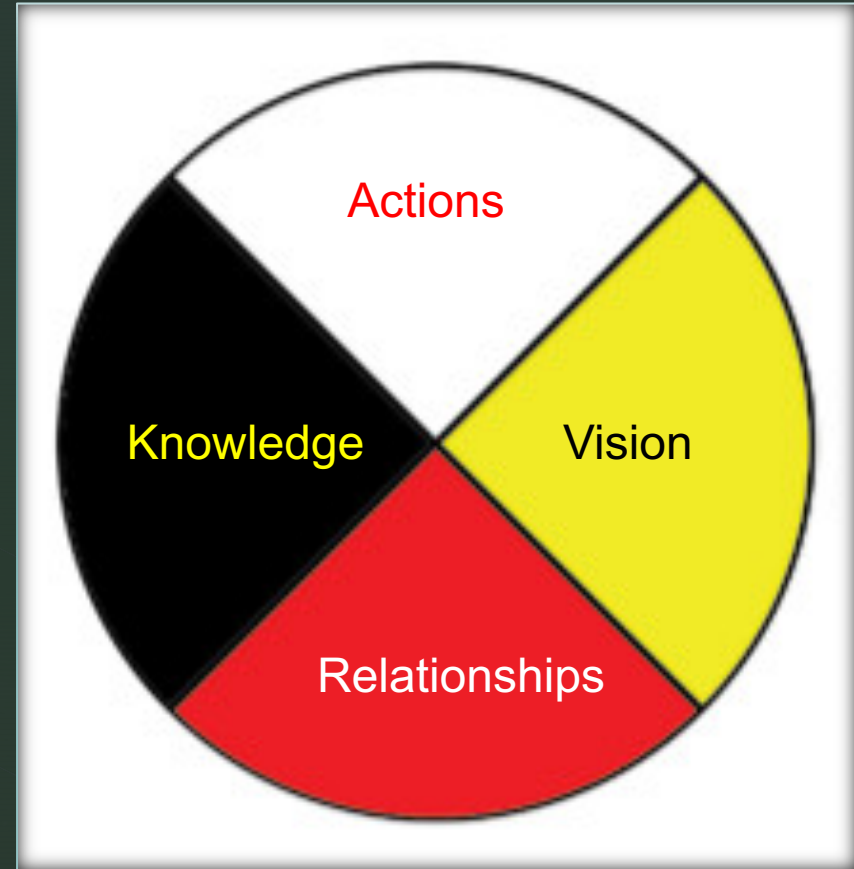
Can we talk to our friends and communities, in a way,  
that keeps them not only excited about this,  
but gets them involved in actually creating change, to  
make the replication of Better Tent cities, a reality?



How can we support A Better Tent City?



# Relationships







Where do I get the energy  
to do everything that needs to be done?



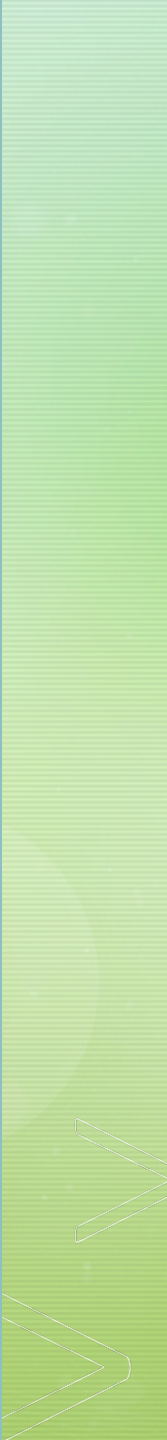


How can the residents help with the future of  
A Better Tent City  
to empower themselves in the process of  
keeping this going?





How do we reverse power so that tent city residents are  
the ones doing this report?





How do we address the fact that it is pretty much all  
women here today?





Don't we all need in a Nadine in our lives?



What would the ideal Better Tent City look like?



Who is willing to have a tent city in their backyard?  
Or near their neighborhood?  
Who will accept A Better Tent City as their neighbors?





Who doesn't know about A Better Tent City  
that needs to know about it?



How do we we support people?



What can we do to help other people  
to not want to look away?

And I mean, look away from poverty.

Look away from addictions.

Look away from profound mental health challenges.



How and where do we find and support incredible people like Nadine?



Are there other benefactors like Ron Doyle,  
in our community that would be willing to host  
and build a better 10 City?



How do we, and I do have my own judgments, right from my experience, to have that openness to listen to others so you see what's being done?



This project was generously supported through the



And made possible with funding provided by



Who distributed financial resources made available through the

**Emergency  
Community  
Support Fund**

A Better Tent City is grateful for this amazing support with our efforts to provide what those with lived experience are expressing, asserting, and know about how to address homelessness practically with compassion and protecting housing as a human right especially in times of crisis like the ones we are living through currently. Together we can be the change.