

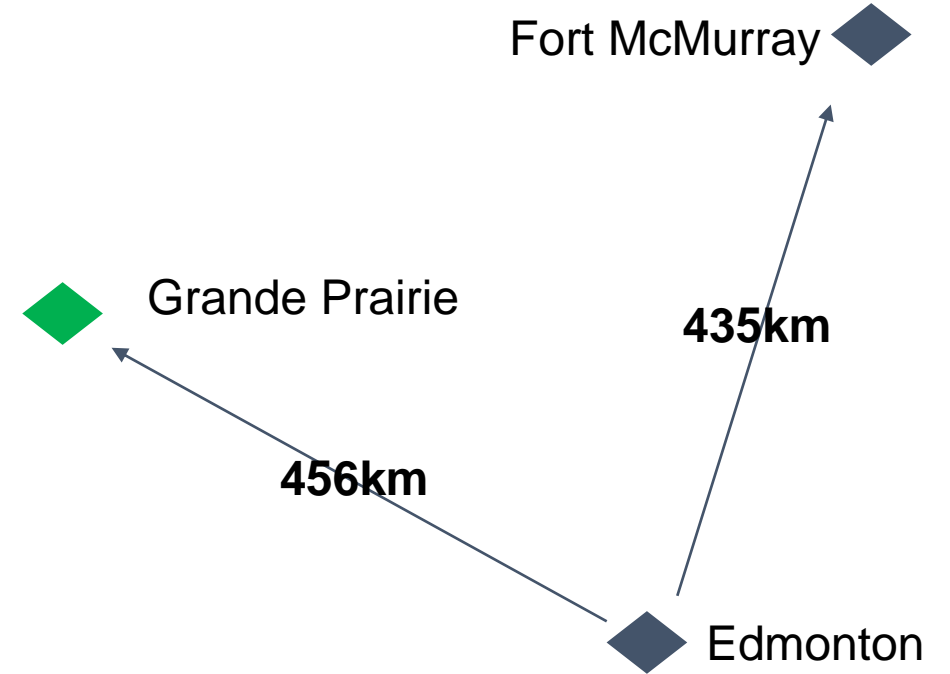
# Coordinated Access

Resilience in a Changing System



# Grande Prairie, AB

- Northwestern Alberta
- Home to nearly 70,000 people and service hub for nearly 300,000
- Oil & gas, agriculture and forestry
- Receive \$5.98M annually to address homelessness
- Centralized Access for over ten years, three years of Coordinated Access



# Housing Need Snapshot

- **2,515** households identified as core housing need
- **725** households on affordable housing waitlist
- Estimated **188** place-based supportive units needed
- **511** individuals on 2022-23 By Name List
- Rental market is relatively affordable at this moment however it is also very unpredictable.



# Our Coordinated Access Reach

The following are accessed through our Housing Hub (Coordinated Access) program:

- 140 scattered-site caseload spaces
- 16 Youth Housing First caseloads
- Housing Loss Prevention available to renters and home-owners
- New in 2023:
  - 81 supportive housing units (low to high intensity)
  - 24 independent living units
  - 11 transitional spaces for youth
  - 36 pre-existing community units now supported by prevention/supportive housing staff
- Access to transitional housing units

# Our Coordinated Access Origin Story – May 2020

- 1. Conducted an evaluation** of current centralized access program and found issues arising from non-transparency, centralized decision-making, and a non-collaborative approach
- 2. Developed a model** for coordinated, shared decision-making and service delivery model
- 3. Reviewed data** to assess positive and negative impacts to ensure transparency
- 4. Improved service provider relationships**, gained buy in and collaboration
- 5. Ended Centralized Access program** contract and replaced with community-based Housing Hub Table

# Process Improvements included:

From:

- **One organization** making referral decisions for multiple supportive housing programs.
- All participating programs **only participating because they were required to** by funding contracts
- Participants needing to go to **ONE single location** to access housing services
- Stakeholders having **relatively little say** in process

To:

- **Several organizations** made referral decisions for multiple supportive housing and outreach programs.
- Partners who **are participating optionally as a collaborative approach**, as well as partners funded partners, **ALL** working toward a common goals and agendas.
- Participants now having staff **available at multiple locations** able to provide access to housing services.
- **Collaborative feedback** every six months



# What happened next?


Achieved significant savings alongside a vastly improved service within 6 months

## Old

- \$388,000 annually
- Decisions made by single organization
- All assessments completed by one single organization
- 76 day wait time for referral
- 50% successful referral rate

## New

- \$80,000 annually
- Decisions made by the Housing Hub Table as a collective
- Assessments now completed by multiple partner organizations
- 7-14 day wait time for referral
- 70% successful referral rate



We continue to adjust to the needs in our community **and feel very confident** about this new process. Community Collaboration is key to working together.



# Presented Challenges:

- Staff turn over change in the municipal office; as a new department
- A change from 100% scattered-site programming was expected, however place-based units were significantly delayed, leaving a program gap
- Loss of “soft” program elements that created momentum
  - Personality and experience
  - Skill fostering collaboration
  - Ability to adjust to changing sector landscape
- Return to old wait-times, old referral success rates
- Loss of some unfunded partners (optional participants)
- Decisions based on an inflexible concept of prioritization that wasn't adjusted to meet community need

# Where are we at now?

- 6 months of hard work has returned our wait time to 1-2 weeks
- Generating renewed interest in participation through conversation, and collaboration
- Making adjustments to increase equity, responsiveness, and protect against turnover impacts
- Revisiting formal agreements, roles and responsibilities
- New place-based supportive housing and transitional units are now opening
- Working together to provide access to non-funded housing programs and include them on decision making

# Summary Thoughts – Learning about Resilient Collaboration

- A program won't be successful forever (or even for very long) based on a rigid format
- A successful process cannot be sustained by “how-to” documentation alone
- Truly need the right people at the table to:
  - **Build** trusting relationships
  - **Lead** and excel in discussions that respond to community need
  - **Create** an environment where people are comfortable offering ideas and solutions, being transparent in decision making.
- We need to know the difference between a program that may need adjustments and a program that isn't working.