

**City of Toronto, Economic and Community Development Committee  
EC7.10 - Implementation of Coroner's Recommendations from the Faulkner and Chapman Inquests**

**September 4, 2019**

Dear Committee members,

All available shelter and respite facilities in the city are at or over capacity. And this is when the weather is still warm and many people experiencing homelessness are choosing to sleep rough.

In October, the Out of the Cold Program will start. It accommodates a total of 60 to 100 people per night on floors across 16 different churches and synagogues. (On Mondays they accommodate 220 people—so if you have to be homeless in the winter, best to only be homeless on Mondays.)

We are only a few months away from temperatures turning frigid and people being left to freeze to death on the streets, or die of smoke inhalation trying to keep warm as Grant Faulkner did.

Daily Shelter Census			
September 3, 2019			
Shelter Sector	Occupancy	Capacity	Occupancy Rate
Co-ed	697	716	97%
Men	1,761	1,804	98%
Women	861	866	99%
Youth	523	543	96%
Family (shelters)	689	689	100%
Family (motels)	2,034	2,430	84%
Total	6,565	7,048	93%

**In spite of the long list of actions being taken and actions that are planned, the City is failing to take the action necessary to prevent more deaths of people experiencing homelessness.**

Twenty-eight of the 29 recommended actions from the Faulkner inquest won't make a bit of difference if there isn't space in a homeless shelter, respite site, or Out of the Cold location for a homeless person to go when they need it: Improving information about the location of services will not prevent more deaths when the location is full and a person needing shelter will be turned away; improving services in shelters for people with addictions will not prevent more people from dying of an overdose on the street if people can't access shelter spaces because they're all full; and outreach to people experiencing homelessness won't keep someone dying from smoke inhalation if they still end up forced to use a propane heater in a shack to keep warm because there's nowhere else to go.

Grant Faulkner died because he needed to keep himself warm while he was outside in the dead of winter. The only actions being taken to increase people's access to shelter from the elements listed in the staff report are plans to open two new shelters, one at 705 Progress Rd with 94 beds, and another at 4117 Lawrence Ave with 89 beds. Not only will that be insufficient to meet the City's standard of 90% capacity once they're open, but the Progress Rd location won't open until early next year and the Lawrence Ave location isn't scheduled to open until late next year.

I appreciate the actions the City is taking to prevent homelessness (like working to legalize rooming houses and increase the supply of affordable housing) and improve the quality of homelessness service delivery, however:

**The City needs to better coordinate and prioritize its response to the Coroner's recommendations.**

**Action must begin with ensuring people have access to respite from the elements by:**

- **Opening a fourth Sprung Structure as soon as possible,**
- **Opening any other available spaces that can be used as shelter or respite sites, and**
- **Ensuring these spaces welcome people who use substances.**

Sincerely,

Melissa Goldstein, The Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust