



## Member Motion

### City Council

#### Notice of Motion

MM25.25	ACTION			Ward:All
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**Leveraging the Federal Government's public security priorities to help make Toronto Community Housing Corporation properties safer - by Councillor Vincent Crisanti, seconded by Councillor Frances Nunziata**

*\* Notice of this Motion has been given.*

*\* This Motion is subject to referral to the Executive Committee. A two thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

#### Recommendations

Councillor Vincent Crisanti, seconded by Councillor Frances Nunziata, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Minister of Public Safety to consider extending the *Communities at Risk: Security Infrastructure Program* to include public housing agencies in urban areas or consider establishing a similar program for public housing agencies such as the Toronto Community Housing Corporation.
2. City Council request the Toronto Community Housing Corporation to work in partnership with the Minister of Public Safety to establish a pilot program to enhance security at TCHC properties.
3. City Council request the City Clerk and the Toronto Community Housing Corporation to forward concerns and any relevant data regarding safety at Toronto Community Housing properties to the Minister of Public Safety.
4. City Council request the City Clerk to forward a copy of this Motion to the Board of Directors of the Toronto Community Housing for consideration.

#### Summary

June's fatal shooting at the Eaton's Centre placed a new focus on gun violence in Toronto and garnered national attention both for the audacity of the crime and its consequences. The fact that went unnoticed was that brazen shootings are far too common in other parts of the city and happen much more frequently.

These crimes often happen far away from places like the Eaton's Centre, where tourists come to take pictures and affluent people shop. Instead, they happen in places like Rexdale, where a person can get shot and all it warrants is two sentences in a 119-word story on the Toronto Star's website. They happen in communities overflowing with young children and in Toronto

Community Housing Corporation (TCHC) properties.

On June 5, the Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC) audited the Mount Olive-Silverstone-Jamestown TCHC property. METRAC's overall verdict on safety, which it defines as "freedom from the threat, fear, and experience of all forms of violence, oppression, and discrimination", was a D-.

The report details an appalling list of deficiencies on this property and rates the property's security as an F. Among the recommendations are to ensure security and fire alarms are working, and to look into installing cameras in specific locations.

Anecdotal evidence supports METRAC's conclusions. Residents are living in fear. They are afraid that when they exit their homes, they may become the next victim of gun violence. They have seen their friends, neighbours and even their own children fall victim.

Across Toronto, year-to-date shootings are up 28 percent over 2011 (based on Toronto Police data retrieved June 28, 2012). Victims are up 37 percent. A map of year-to-date shootings shows concerning cluster around TCHC properties in Rexdale.

After one particular shooting incident in 2011, Toronto Police expressed frustration with their inability to identify shooters because security cameras were either not operational or not in place. In response, I organized a camera audit with the Toronto Police Service and TCHC. The audit indicated six cameras at TCHC properties in Ward 1 were defective and recommended 19 new cameras.

These findings were part of a broader report on security cameras presented in June to the TCHC Board of Directors.

Toronto Community Housing Corporation residents do not expect their landlord to eradicate crime but they do expect their landlord to seize an opportunity when it presents itself. On their behalf, I have encouraged the TCHC board to seriously consider installing security cameras on properties in Ward 1 and investing in further safety enhancements.

The primary stumbling block in making this a reality is a lack of funding. Council has approved dozens of stand-alone TCHC properties to be sold and the revenues to be directed to capital improvements. Council has yet to make a decision on hundreds more. But even the potential revenues from the sale of hundreds of stand-alone homes would be subject to competing priorities. Opening the door to spending some of these funds would put Council in the very difficult position of choosing between improving safety versus making properties habitable.

Toronto's dilemma, however, is an opportunity for the Federal Government to reinforce its commitment to public safety.

When the Federal Government in April ended the Canadian Firearms Registry, it argued the program had been costly (more than \$1 billion to establish and more than \$66 million in net annual operating cost for 2010-2011) and questioned its impact on public safety. It argued the Registry targeted law-abiding gun owners rather than criminals.

Five months before eliminating the Gun Registry, the Federal Government announced the next phase of the *Communities at Risk: Security Infrastructure Program*, which provides grants to places of worship, community centres and educational institutions at risk of being victimized

by hate motivated crime.

The Federal Government should recognize however that gang violence and random shootings are as likely to instill fear in a community as hate crimes, and the trail of victims is no less tragic. The Federal Government should further recognize that a disproportionate number of Toronto Community Housing residents victimized or intimidated by gun and gang violence are indeed refugees or new Canadians.

Given the Federal Government's approach to crime prevention, a demonstrated commitment to community safety and the anticipated savings from the end of the Federal Gun Registry, it should consider extending the *Communities at Risk: Security Infrastructure Program* to public housing properties or consider establishing a new fund to help protect vulnerable and innocent residents.

(Submitted to City Council on July 11 and 12, 2012 as MM25.25)

### **Background Information (City Council)**

Member Motion MM25.25

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2012/mm/bgrd/backgroundfile-48977.pdf>

(June 5, 2012) Metropolitan Action Committee on Violence Against Women and Children (METRAC) - Safety Audit Report Card Summary

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2012/mm/bgrd/backgroundfile-49005.pdf>

(October 28, 2011) Letter from the Operating Unit Manager, Weston/Rexdale, Toronto Community Housing Corporation

<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2012/mm/bgrd/backgroundfile-49006.pdf>