

## City Council

### Notice of Motion

MM35.17	ACTION			Ward:All
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### **Closing the Service Gap in the Downtown East Revitalization Area - by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Councillor Lucy Troisi**

*\* 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 Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Councillor Lucy Troisi, recommends that:

1. City Council direct the Deputy City Manager, Cluster A, the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration and request the Medical Officer of Health, in consultation with stakeholders and the Ward Councillors, to identify the resources required to respond and if not available, to report directly to the Budget Committee with a funding request.
2. City Council request the Medical Officer of Health and direct the General Manager Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation and the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to work with the appropriate City divisions, in consultation with stakeholders and the Ward Councillors, to establish an expert staff team to respond to the immediate crises being faced in the Downtown East over the next 12 months.
3. City Council request the Medical Officer of Health and direct the General Manager Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation and the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to develop a 5-year plan, in consultation with the appropriate City divisions and agencies including stakeholders and the Ward Councillors, to coordinate City services and programs and develop a comprehensive plan to holistically address the long-term community needs in establishing a healthy sustainable neighbourhood.

### **Summary**

The drug overdose crisis in the City is a serious public health issue. Of particular concern is the role of opioid use such as heroin and fentanyl leading to increased death rates. Between April 1, 2016 and March 31, 2017, 494 people in the City had to be hospitalized due to opioid

poisoning. This crisis, in addition to increased rates of poverty, violence, homelessness, mental health issues and a lack of affordable housing, has resulted in compounded concerns that require immediate intervention from all levels of government.

Specifically, the area surrounded by Carlton Street to the north, Queen Street to the south, Yonge Street to the west and Parliament Street to the east has experienced alarming increases in opioid related incidents, violence and other critical issues over the past few years. In 2015 a total of 366 critical incidents were recorded in the area. This number rose to 552 in 2016, an increase of approximately 51 percent. The anticipated projection for 2017 is 588, which represents a further increase of approximately 7 percent. These increases, combined with the current rates of poverty, homelessness and mental health concerns, have created a compounded problem for area residents and has put this community in crisis.

Although a number of initiatives have been undertaken in the area, such as the Downtown East Revitalization, Moss Park Redevelopment and George Street Revitalization, in addition to the establishment of safe injection sites to mitigate opioid and other drug challenges, greater support is required to comprehensively address the community needs. Further, City and agency staff are facing their own challenges as they struggle to manage daily operations resulting in a lack of City service coordination and supports. Unless immediate and targeted action is taken, this community crisis could easily spread to other neighbourhoods and the impact of this crisis on businesses, tourism and the local community could be exacerbated.

In addition to requesting the federal and provincial governments to increase their efforts in the area to address the multitude of issues facing this community, I recommend City Council direct staff to establish an expert team composed of key City divisional staff to respond to the immediate situation. Further, City staff should be directed to develop a service coordination implementation plan to proactively address community concerns over the long-term.

To undertake this community initiative, additional resources will be required over a 12 month period to address immediate community concerns.

A broader long-term plan would also be developed in consultation with the appropriate City divisions and agencies to coordinate City services and programs in the area, to address community concerns over a 5-year horizon.

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

Member Motion MM35.17