



Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam

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To: Chair & Members, Community Development & Recreation Committee

Re: Wraparound Services for the Emergency Shelter at 354 George Street

Summary:

The Province of Ontario has indicated that they are currently renovating the former York Detention Centre, located at 354 George Street, in order to be utilized by the City of Toronto for emergency shelter providing 75 new beds.

Located directly across from this building is Seaton House, Canada's largest men's shelter, containing 534 beds. City Council recently approved the George Street Revitalization, a plan to rebuild Seaton House, which is currently outdated and facing a number of issues related to the facility condition, monolithic size and format of its program. Also located on this block of George Street is the School House Shelter, another emergency men's shelter, comprised of 40 beds. The opening of the York Detention Centre as emergency shelter will be the third men's shelter in the span of 50 metres on one street.

The section of George Street where this new shelter will be located has experienced a number of violent incidents, as well as ongoing safety concerns. I have worked closely with residents, city staff, and Toronto Police Services to address many of these concerns through changes to the design and lighting on the street. While this has been able to improve some conditions, we have seen a deterioration in community safety that has been compounded by the opioid crisis facing our City, and deficits in health and social services that exist in the Downtown East. Relocating vulnerable residents who are unfamiliar with this unique street and without adequate social services, mental health, harm reduction and addiction supports, is a safety concern for both future residents of the shelter as well as the local community.

While I am pleased to see that a new shelter will be created, I would like to ensure that any new shelter provides the essential wraparound services on-site that homeless residents require.

Recommendations:

1) Direct the General Manager, Shelter, Support & Housing Administration to report back to the February 28th, 2018 meeting of the Community Development & Recreation Committee with a comprehensive plan to provide health care, social services, mental health supports, addiction

supports and harm reduction services on-site at the new emergency shelter at 354 George Street and to review the plan with the Toronto Central Local Health Integration Network to ensure that there are adequate funding and resources to implement the plan.

Respectfully submitted,

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