

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM11.13	ACTION			Ward: All
---------	--------	--	--	-----------

Providing Clarity, Coordination and Transparency in Locating and Re-locating Shelters, Respite, and Drop-In Programs in the Downtown East - by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Councillor James Pasternak

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Economic and Community Development Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

Recommendations

Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Councillor James Pasternak, recommends that:

1. City Council direct the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, and the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration, to report to the January 14, 2020 meeting of the Economic and Community Development Committee to:
 - a. provide an update on all projects taking place in the Downtown East area involving the expansion, renovation, reduction, or relocation of any City-funded services and facilities, including, but not limited to: shelters, respites, and drop-ins; and
 - b. identify whether the Downtown East Action Plan coordinator is being provided with the appropriate controls and authorities necessary to inform decision-making, with regards to facility and program planning in the Downtown East, and what additional controls or enhanced authorities are necessary to ensure the local context and area needs are prioritized.
2. City Council direct the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, to report to the January 14, 2020 meeting of the Economic and Community Development Committee with recommendations to improve upon public engagement and consultation around locating new shelters, respites, and drop-in programs in the Downtown East, such that:
 - a. area resident groups and major stakeholders are informed of plans proactively, irrespective of delegated authority; and
 - b the maximum amount of time is provided between initial consultation and

implementation for local context, health and safety considerations to be appropriately addressed, balancing the time needed for staff to complete preliminary and necessary prerequisite work.

3. City Council direct the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration, to pause any relocation processes underway for shelters, respites, and drop-ins in the Downtown East so that a community consultation plan can be established immediately with local residents to inform the decision-making process and ensure that any relocation does not contribute to an increase in vulnerability for service users.

Summary

On October 3, 2019, South Cabbagetown residents became aware that a women's resource centre was to be relocated from another part of Ward 13 to a location in their neighbourhood. While the resource centre has not historically been a cause for concern with regards to community health and safety, plans for its relocation came as a surprise to residents currently grappling with complex issues around mental health, addictions, homelessness, and vulnerability in the immediate area and along the Sherbourne corridor.

The local Councillor first spoke about the relocation plan with staff on July 18, 2019. At that time a lease deal was still pending for the new location. The local Councillor and her staff were informed that the decision was final, under delegated authority and that the process would take until late 2020. At that meeting concerns were raised about the plan, citing area health, safety, and service coordination challenges that were all identified as part of the Enhanced 12-month Action Plan for the Downtown East (Item 2018.CD29.5) endorsed during the June 26-29, 2018 meeting of City Council. They also noted that the plan came as a surprise, as staff had indicated in the Supplementary report from the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration and the General Manager, Shelter, Support and Housing Administration on Locating Municipal Shelters in the Downtown East Area (Item 2019.PH3.2a) in March, 2019, that a "collaborative forum" would be created under the Downtown East Action Plan to facilitate consultation on issues like locating new services. The same supplementary report indicated that "a systematic community-based research project [would] be undertaken to understand how marginalized populations live out their daily lives in the area" and that this would "be used to inform programmatic responses and identify where there are opportunities to shift services for greater impact." Finally, the Councillor and her staff asked that the community be engaged as fully as possible, early on, to allow for their feedback to inform the plans as much as possible to address concerns proactively.

Unfortunately, on October 3, 2019, the community became aware of the plans for the relocation of the Adelaide Resource Centre for Women by way of a Delegated Approval Form detailing the terms of the lease, rather than through direct engagement and consultation. This was not the appropriate way for a community to find out about plans for their neighbourhood.

This series of events has highlighted two areas that need attention - how communities are engaged with regards to services moving into, and within, the Downtown East and how the specific challenges of the area are being considered in the context of City-wide service planning. Both need to be reviewed in order to be improved upon. Residents of the Downtown East need to have a clear understanding of work and planning underway that involves their neighbourhoods and the City needs to ensure that new services and resources are deployed in a sustainable and effective way.

Background Information (City Council)

Revised Member Motion MM11.13

(<http://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2019/mm/bgrd/backgroundfile-139259.pdf>)