

City Council

Notice of Motion

MM12.21	ACTION			Ward: All
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Ending Homelessness - Building New Supportive Housing Now - by Councillor Joe Cressy, seconded by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam

** Notice of this Motion has been given.*

** This Motion is subject to referral to the Planning and Housing Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral*

Recommendations

Councillor Joe Cressy, seconded by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, recommends that:

1. City Council direct the Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services to include in the 2020 Operating and Capital Budgets:

a. one-third of the capital funds, which could include the value of City-owned land, required to meet the Council-approved target of building 1,800 new supportive housing units a year for 10 years starting in 2020; and

b. any operating dollars and/or staff positions required to support the build program.

2. City Council call on the Provincial and Federal Governments to each commit to providing one-third of the capital funding to meet the Council-approved target of building 18,000 new units of supportive housing over the next 10 years, 1,800 per year, to assist in addressing the City of Toronto's growing homelessness crisis.

3. City Council call on the Provincial Government to commit to providing new operating funding for 18,000 new units of supportive housing over the next 10 years, 1,800 per year, to assist in addressing the City of Toronto's growing homelessness crisis.

4. City Council direct the Deputy City Manager, Community and Social Services to report to the January 22, 2020 meeting of the Planning and Housing Committee on:

a. the steps required to meet the Council-approved target of building 1,800 new supportive housing units in 2020; and

b. a bridging strategy to move 1,800 households into stable housing while the new build program is being rolled out, including resources required to expand any programs needed to accomplish this such as eviction prevention, housing allowance program streams, and

community partnerships.

Summary

Homelessness is a crisis in our City. On any given night, over 8,000 people rely on our shelters, emergency respites, overnight drop-ins, and Out of the Cold programs to find a safe place to spend the night. Since 2016, the City has added 2,500 hundred beds to our emergency system. Our low-barrier, emergency respite spaces have grown from 150 to 800, operating year-round. Yet each and every night, our shelter system is at, or over, capacity.

During the first weeks of 2018 alone, we saw four Torontonians lose their lives on our streets. This year, during the height of our first snowstorm on Monday November 11th, we lost another community member who died in a bus shelter near the Ferry Docks. Homelessness is a crisis, and we must respond.

The stark reality facing those without adequate homes is a multi-year wait for supportive housing and 181,000 people on the waitlist for affordable housing. We must ensure that everyone has a safe place to sleep, each and every night. But, we must also create a path out of our shelter system, and into stable and supportive housing for the thousands who need it.

Supportive housing is a crucial component in addressing the growing crisis of homelessness in our City, and Council has identified it as a priority many times in the past number of years. In March 2018, City Council approved my Motion to adopt a target of building 18,000 new supportive housing units over the next 10 years, 1,800 per year, to help people transition out of the shelter system, and into more stable and permanent housing. This is now the City of Toronto's target. Then in January 2019, City Council approved my Motion for staff to report to the March 2019 meeting of the Planning and Housing Committee on options for an aggressive supportive and transitional housing build plan in Toronto. In an update report, it was indicated that instead, a plan would be included in the Housing Opportunities plan this fall. However to date, no plan has been considered by Committee or Council. And, our target for building 1,800 new supportive housing units a year, adopted in 2018, remains unmet.

While we must continue to ask our Provincial and Federal partners for urgent assistance, the City must make new supportive housing a priority. When faced with the capital repair backlog crisis at Toronto Community Housing, Council committed through our Close the Housing Gap campaign to one-third of the funding needed to address the \$2.6 billion capital repair backlog. Now, the City must commit to one-third of the funding needed to meet our Council-approved new supportive housing target, and renew our urgent request that the Provincial and Federal governments do the same.

We cannot wait. Without new supportive housing this crisis will only continue to grow. And, we will continue to see tragedies unfold on our streets.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM12.21