



## City Council

### Motion without Notice

MM32.30	ACTION			Ward: 13
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### **Prioritizing Review of North St. James Town for Potential Inclusion as a Neighbourhood Improvement Area - by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Councillor Mike Layton**

*\* 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.*

*\* This Motion has been deemed urgent by the Chair.*

### **Recommendations**

Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Councillor Mike Layton, recommends that:

1. City Council direct the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to accelerate the review to determine the suitability for the North St. James Town neighbourhood, focusing on the neighbourhood east of Sherbourne Street, to be identified as a Neighbourhood Improvement Area and report back to the Economic and Community Development Committee as soon as possible.

### **Summary**

In 2019, City Council directed the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration to determine the suitability for the North St. James Town neighbourhood, focusing on the neighbourhood east of Sherbourne Street, to be identified as a Neighbourhood Improvement Area when the next City-wide review to identify Neighbourhood Improvement Areas is complete and report back to the Economic and Community Development Committee in the fourth quarter of 2020 as part of this process.

As a result of COVID-19, this review has been delayed and the work is now not

scheduled to be completed before 2022.

St. James Town is Canada's most densely populated areas, one of the most culturally diverse communities within Toronto and one of Toronto's poorest neighbourhoods. The residents of St. James Town consists of approximately 65 percent immigrant status residents. St. James Town residents have a median household income more than \$20,000 below the municipal median.

COVID-19 has had a disproportionate impact on St. James Town in infection rates and death. Even before COVID-19, residents in St. James Town have higher rates of hospitalization for mental health conditions (915.4 per 100,000 vs. 722 per 100,000) and overall hospitalizations (85.1 per 1000 to 72.1), and highest low urgency emergency department visits amongst youth ages 5-19 (138.5 per 1000 to 106.1).

Community Organizations have been working for over a year to support residents in St James Town, organizing health care support and providing emergency food. These organizations have done heroic work but as the pandemic goes on, that need is too great and has reached a point where we cannot deal with the crisis without sustained and immediate support.

Whether a resident can access inexpensive, healthy food is one of the social determinants of health recognized by the Canadian Mental Health Association and other organizations. The importance of food security is also recognized through the City's 2018 Toronto Food Strategy and the City's 2017 climate action strategy, TransformTO.

Now is the time to direct immediate emergency supports in St James Town. The City of Toronto must accelerate the review to include North St. James Town as a Neighbourhood improvement area to direct much needed resourced into the area.

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

Revised Member Motion MM32.30