



Since City Council adjourned last July, Toronto has seen incredible violence enacted against the residents of downtown Toronto encampments and their supporters. We have also learned that [the collective cost of evicting Trinity Bellwoods, Alexandra Park, and Lamport Stadium's encampments reached almost \\$2 million in public money](#). Beyond this financial cost, the cost to the lives of encampment residents has been deep and lasting trauma. This cannot be undone.

These residents have endured injuries, police targeting, arrests, and the destruction of their homes and treasured belongings. These costs are untenable. Their supporters have also been subject to violent police use-of-force – videos from media outlets clearly show this, as do the blood and bandages from their lingering injuries, which include concussions and broken bones. Media themselves faced threats of criminalization from police simply for doing their job – a role that is vital to a free, functional, and democratic society.

And for what? We know that the outcome of these evictions was that not one resident received housing from the City of Toronto. Most people – nearly 60% – simply relocated elsewhere outdoors. Moreover, [just 8% of encampment residents have received housing during the pandemic](#). Tragically and unnecessarily, some have even died, including Jerry, who overdosed two days after his traumatic eviction from Alexandra Park. All of this is to say that the approach to encampments inflicted upon our City this past summer was an abject failure: expensive, inhumane, grossly unjust, and deadly.

This past June, the Toronto Drop-in Network co-authored [A Path Forward](#): a set of recommendations outlining a human rights-compliant approach to supporting unhoused people. While Mayor John Tory described our calls for City Council to deliberate on and adopt [A Path Forward](#) as “[unwelcome](#),” we have not seen the forcible removal of Moss Park, Cherry Beach, or the growing encampment in Dufferin Grove following the eviction of Lamport Stadium. This has been a welcome outcome, and one that must continue *because it works*. Indeed, the latter encampment has, in the past month, [been in receipt of exclusive supports, including housing offers, ID clinics, and offers of choice over indoor spacing options](#). While we applaud this approach, we also recognize that it is being deployed in Councillor Ana Bailao's ward only, and that some former residents of evicted encampments do not appear to be receiving supports from Streets to Homes or the City. This includes Sam, a woman evicted from Alexandra Park, who is now living on the street at Queen St. W. and Ryerson Ave., and who is receiving no support to mitigate her trauma post-eviction, let alone secure housing. **It is imperative that the approach being utilized in Dufferin Grove, which reflects many aspects of A Path Forward, be adopted and expanded upon to include all encampments and**



**people sleeping rough in Toronto, and that no encampment be subject to forcible removal ever again in our city.**

All of this said, a better way simply is not enough: there must be recourse for the approach the city has taken with encampments, which has led to harm and death and a high financial cost to the public. For this reason, the Toronto Drop-in Network, alongside a broad swath of the public, demands accountability for the violent, militarized approach used by the City in Trinity Bellwoods, Alexandra Park, and Lamport Stadium. On this, we support Councillor Wong-Tam's [administrative inquiry to city staff](#), which will be answered at this October session of Council. As well, we support the [Ombudsman of Toronto launching an investigation into City of Toronto's encampment evictions this summer](#). We applaud both of these efforts, and any effort to provide accountability for the City's actions regarding encampments. However, we note that neither inquiry has the authority to investigate the actions of Toronto Police, who enacted, and continue to enact, serious harm against encampment residents and their supporters.

**We believe that the actions of Toronto Police in encampments must be investigated. Because of this, we urge all of Council to support Councillors Matlow and Layton's motion requesting a public inquiry by a judge of the Superior Court of Ontario. Unlike the Ombudsman or City staff, a judge has the authority to investigate Toronto Police. This motion must be passed by Council. The public demands it, and they need to know that their elected representatives find the approach to encampments and the actions of police as reprehensible as they do.**

Your support is deeply appreciated, and collectively we can realize a just and equitable city where everyone belongs, regardless of their living situation.

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