

Deputation Re: Community Crisis Project

City staff are to be commended for the work they have done to bring the community crisis project to a launch ready state. This project will provide critical services to divert people from a police crisis response and we look forward to learning about each of the four projects as they progress over the next three years.

Respect and care for our fellow Torontonians means we must strive for the least coercive, most community - based response possible to people who are in crisis. To support these values, the pilots must be accountable, individually and collectively, to the community they serve. This community is diverse, and this is well reflected in the pilots. The community is also, always, people with personal experience of mental health and addiction issues, and the organizations that represent and are composed of them/us. We look forward to seeing this reflected in the advisory groups for the individual pilot projects and the advisory panel to the project as a whole.

The independent evaluation will provide important information about what it takes to expand civilian crisis response, and we look forward to seeing the results of *including peer expertise* on the teams, as well as learning about the overall crisis response and follow up. We also support the recommended approach to scaling civilian crisis response based on what is learned through the pilots.

We note that the City is investing over \$10 million this year. Scaling will undoubtedly cost more and will be informed by an analysis of service recipient qualities, needs, specific and broader issues, and outcomes over time. Toronto does not have an adequately resourced mental health and addictions service system. We hope that the City will begin advocacy now with other orders of government about funding gaps. Currently there are over 21,000 people waiting to access supportive housing and access to community support services is problematic. While the funding of the pilots will add capacity for crisis follow up, there will remain significant deficits in access to community support services, including *peer run options* and supportive housing.

In 2012 the Mental Health Commission of Canada recommended that all provinces increase the mental health share of health spending to 9%, and 2% of social spending. The current provincial commitment gets us about 30% of the way. In October 2019 City Council unanimously approved a motion by Councillor Kristin Wong Tam for Toronto to call on the federal government to meet the MHCC spending targets. If this happened, Toronto would see annualised funding for mental health and addictions increase by \$300 million and increase funding for supportive housing by \$600 million.

<http://app.toronto.ca/tmmis/viewAgendaItemHistory.do?item=2019.MM11.12>

While the motion passed, the funding has not arrived. While some funds may ultimately be diverted from police services when community crisis services meet needs to which the police have been responding. But this will not be enough. It will be important for the City to develop a fiscal plan that accurately costs the needs for expanded crisis services, supportive housing, affordable housing, and other community based mental health and addiction services and work with the provincial and federal governments to increase mental health and addictions funding.

We have appreciated being part of the Accountability Table and having City staff present to our committee on the project and get our ideas and advice. We look forward to a continuing collaboration as the project proceeds and ask the Executive and Council to approve the staff report.

Respectfully submitted,

Steve Lurie, Jennifer Chambers

Co- Chairs Toronto Police Service Board, Mental Health and Addictions Panel (MHAAP)