
City Council

Motion without Notice

MM39.29	ACTION			Ward: All
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Planning for Freedom - Ensuring Public Safety and Confidence - by Councillor Kristyn Wong-Tam, seconded by Councillor Mike Layton

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

** This Motion is not subject to a vote to waive referral. This Motion has been added to the agenda and is before Council for debate*

Recommendations

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

1. City Council direct the City Manager, in consultation with the Office of Emergency Management, and the Toronto Police Service to develop and communicate an action plan in preparation for potential disruption from the Freedom Convoy Protest in advance of this weekend's protests and where possible, make public the actions being taken by the City and Police in response.

Summary

Beginning January 30, The "Freedom Convoy" protest to end COVID-19 mandates in Canada for truckers took over downtown Ottawa. Over the past 4 days, residents and businesses in Downtown Ottawa have been under siege, unable to safely leave their homes or open their businesses. Despite many protestors remaining peaceful, reports of intimidation, threats and continuous noise disruption as horns are blared have caused significant security and well being challenges. Despite Provincial COVID-19 restrictions being eased on Monday, many prominent businesses, including the CF Rideau Mall have had to remain closed for the safety of staff and patrons.

Reports have begun to circulate that an offshoot of this convoy is planning to arrive in Toronto over the weekend. While we all hope that the reports of violence and intimidation won't be repeated here, the City of Toronto in partnership with the Toronto Police Service must develop and communicate a response plan in order to maintain the safety and confidence of our residents, and businesses.

While we must allow for the right to protest, our residents also deserve to have confidence and clarity about what to expect should parts of the protest devolve into more targeted violence and harassment, including but not limited to physical and verbal harassment, public display of hate symbols and flagrant disregard of noise by-laws.

We already have experience with these disruptions in front of our hospitals, encumbering access to lifesaving treatments and almost 2 years of targeted harassment of businesses and residents.

This plan should include a clear reporting function for residents, regular communication from officials on relevant elements of the plan with assurances about how the Toronto Police Service intends to support the need to protect public assets, business operations, emergency services, transportation and ensure public order.

Background Information (City Council)

Member Motion MM39.29