

**Pilon, Janet**

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**Subject:** homeless encampments

From: **Clara Lu**

Date: Wed, Jul 29, 2020 at 9:03 PM

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To: <[nrinder.nann@hamilton.ca](mailto:nrinder.nann@hamilton.ca)>

Cc: <[hclc.cjch@gmail.com](mailto:hclc.cjch@gmail.com)>, Keeping Six <[info@keepingsix.org](mailto:info@keepingsix.org)>, <[info@hamsmart.ca](mailto:info@hamsmart.ca)>

Dear Councillor Nann,

I am a resident physician living in ward 3. I recently learned that the city plans to dismantle the homeless encampments at Ferguson and FOC this Friday. During the pandemic, people with no or tenuous housing have been forced to choose between crowded shelters, where physical distancing is next to impossible, and setting up tents on the street.

I am concerned that the plans to dismantle these encampments will only serve to displace vulnerable people who have already been displaced from a stable living situation several times over. From a health standpoint, the individual- and community-level consequences of lost opportunities to provide outreach and follow-up to vulnerable patients cannot be understated. I am particularly jarred by the recent exponential rise in overdoses and overdose deaths, which will only increase when patients struggling with addictions are displaced, isolated, and lose access to nearby harm reduction services.

I'm writing to you with requests, in alignment with Keeping Six and the HamSmart team, that:

1. The City not dismantle homeless encampments
2. The City provide interim and permanent housing for encampment residents with necessary supports
3. The City prioritize individuals experiencing homelessness for urgent housing placement
4. The City engage encampment residents in assessing their needs prior to dismantling
5. The City remove barriers in shelters and hotels in order to accommodate the individual needs of encampment residents
6. The City allow for sanctioned encampment sites and/or designate specific parks/public lands where individuals are allowed to set up tents/temporary structures
7. The City allow for a streamlined, low-barrier, accessible process of issuing permits allowing for tents and temporary structures

Thank you for your attention to and advocacy on this matter.

Clara Lu