

CITY OF HAMILTON

NOTICE OF MOTION

Council: September 15, 2021

MOVED BY COUNCILLOR M. WILSON.....

Integration of the Encampment Response Strategy into the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan

WHEREAS on August 9, 2021 Hamilton City Council voted in the majority to repeal its Encampment Response Protocol that permitted unhoused individuals to shelter in public spaces for up to 14 days with no more than five tents per location;

WHEREAS the City of Hamilton returned to pre-pandemic enforcement levels that prevents anyone from sheltering on city property including public park areas effective August 30, 2021;

WHEREAS the City of Hamilton's pre-pandemic enforcement level resides within the domain of Municipal Bylaw Enforcement with support from the Hamilton Police Service;

WHEREAS the City of Hamilton recognizes the rise in unsheltered homelessness during COVID-19 continues to highlight ongoing systemic health, social and economic inequities and remains an ongoing concern for the City;

WHEREAS in its Housing and Homelessness Action Plan (HHAP) Council committed to taking an individualized, person-centred approach to housing by connecting those experiencing homelessness with the available community resources and supports;

WHEREAS HHAP does not include an approach of responding to homeless individuals living in encampments;

WHEREAS Council has acknowledged that homelessness is a gendered experience, impacting single women, trans and non-binary individuals differently than single men or families;

WHEREAS staff advised the City of Hamilton's Emergency and Community Services Committee at their September 9, 2021 meeting of the occupancy pressures that exist, particularly for women, within the city's emergency shelter system and that for some, emergency shelters are not an option;

WHEREAS Council at its February 27, 2019 meeting directed staff to develop and integrate a consistent gender and equity framework, inclusive of all evaluative tools, to the City's Housing and Homelessness Strategy and service delivery;

WHEREAS Indigenous Peoples are significantly over-represented among Canada's homeless population as a result of colonization;

WHEREAS the City of Hamilton has stated that its homeless servicing system must account for the systemic over-representation of Indigenous Peoples experiencing homelessness and aim to design a system that not only responds to Indigenous homelessness but also respects, honours and promotes the strength and resiliency of Indigenous Peoples (Coming Together to End Homelessness, July 2019)

WHEREAS Council through its Urban Indigenous Strategy (2019) is committed to developing and strengthening its relationship with Indigenous Peoples;

WHEREAS action Item #24 in the City of Hamilton's Urban Indigenous Strategy Implementation Plan is to enable city staff to deliver city services in a culturally appropriate way;

WHEREAS Indigenous partners have emphasized the importance of policy, planning and program development being Indigenous-led or co-created to ensure that municipal work and outcomes better addresses the needs and well-being of Indigenous communities;

WHEREAS staff were directed to develop an evaluation framework for the encampment response plan at its September 9, 2021 meeting of City of Hamilton's Emergency and Community Services Committee;

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED:

That staff be directed to:

- (a) Create a formal encampment response strategy that identifies the goals and objectives that align to the Housing and Homelessness Action Plan
- (b) Identify the outcomes, causes and conditions leading to individuals living in encampments into the evaluative framework to assist the city and our community partners in measuring progress towards the achievement of said goals;
- (c) Ensure Equity and Gender Based Analysis (GBA+) outcomes are identified, tracked and measured in the evaluative framework; and,
- (d) Consult with Indigenous partners to devise principles, protocols and safe practices to follow when engaging with Indigenous Peoples who are unhoused and living in encampments and ensure that these are part of the Encampment Response Strategy and evaluative framework.