

From: L.J. Don

Sent: January 10, 2025 8:32 PM

To: clerk@hamilton.ca

Subject: Comment for inclusion in council debate regarding motion to dismantle encampments

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Hello,

I am requesting my following written comment be included in the Council Meeting regarding the motion to dismantle encampments in the City.

Hello Everyone,

My name is Laina Don and my family and I live in Tom Jackson's Ward 6. While I am sympathetic to the many challenges some homeless individuals face, there is an increased frustration with those that are abusing the system, selling drugs and bringing crime to our neighborhoods, leaving human waste, garbage and discarded used needles on the ground and threatening families using our public parks.

We are a young family and bought our first home in Hamilton almost 3 years ago. In that small period of time, I have watched this entire City crumble and become a place I no longer feel safe living in and raising my children. We picked our neighbourhood because it was family friendly but that is no longer the case. We have frequently had issues, especially in the Fresh Co. Plaza and Japanese United Church property (Upper Gage and Fennell are) with homeless individuals. We have also had terrifying encounters just outside our house, particularly when a homeless man (that was reported multiple times) was screaming through the street waving a metal bar.

We used to enjoy going downtown, particularly to James Street or Bayfront to enjoy a walk or local cuisine but Downtown is a place we can no longer safely bring our children.

Myself, and many others, are angry and frustrated with the City for 2 main reasons;

1. The City continues to raise Property Tax by an astronomical amount (the percentage voted on is just an "average" and some citizens have an increase way more than others) and a good chunk of our money is going towards servicing these encampments. This is not Municipal Taxpayers responsibility. The Federal and Provincial Government have given Hamilton millions of dollars in funding for homeless services but it's still somehow not enough. The City needs to work with the money provided, not make the taxpayers cough up the difference the City wants or thinks they need. Many individuals in this City are low income, seniors or young families that are already struggling to get by, including my family. We cannot continue to afford these insane property tax

increases. The City is literally going to make more people homeless by helping the homeless.

2. Compared to other Cities in the GTHA, Hamilton is offering the most services to the homeless. While I am not saying we shouldn't offer services, it seems as though Hamilton has gone beyond just services and wants to eliminate the homeless crisis and provide housing for all. This is not solely our City's responsibility and it isn't possible, especially when our services are attracting other individuals from other Cities. Halton Region isn't offering emergency shelters, building low income housing or pouring hundreds of thousands of dollars into homeless services. In fact, it is well known that Burlington is notorious for sending their homeless individuals over to Hamilton on the Parkdale bus. Niagara Region does offer services but nowhere near the amount of support Hamilton does. Other regions need to do their fair share as well, it doesn't just fall all on our City yet that is how the City of Hamilton is behaving.

If the City of Hamilton continues to allow encampments in public parks after Judge Ramsay's decision, homeless individuals from other Cities that are banning daytime encampments will flock to Hamilton and our City will continue to be overwhelmed.

Hamilton is not a sanctuary for the homeless. Enough is enough.