

Revised Notice of Motion

Call to Action on Housing and Homelessness

WHEREAS the behaviour of some inhabitants of encampments in and around the City of Cambridge could raise a potential risk to the safety, health, and well-being of law-abiding, tax-paying citizens in adjacent neighbourhoods, and Cambridge Council recognizes the concerns of these citizens and supports their right to feel safe and secure in a peaceful neighbourhood, streetscape, city, and environment;

WHEREAS the City of Cambridge relies upon provincial and regional understanding, enforcement, and action on this issue, as the Ontario Superior Court of Justice in its ruling issued January 27, 2023, held that removal of encampments from public lands, when there are insufficient available, low barrier, truly accessible spaces to accommodate the homeless population equating to "adequate safe alternatives to sleeping in encampments", constitutes a violation of "section 7 of the Charter [of Rights and Freedoms] in that it deprives the homeless residents of the Encampment of life, liberty and security of the person" and, further, found that Waterloo Region has inadequate spaces to meet this test;

WHEREAS the homeless crisis is taking a devastating toll on families and communities, undermining a healthy and prosperous Ontario;

Whereas tent cities and living rough are a serious challenge in all **Ontario** communities;

WHEREAS the homelessness crisis is the result of the underinvestment and poor policy choices of successive provincial governments;

WHEREAS homelessness requires a range of housing, social service and health solutions from government;

Whereas emergency shelters are critical but are not appropriate for all **people experiencing homelessness**;

Whereas **available, low barrier, truly accessible spaces to accommodate the homeless population equating to "adequate safe alternatives to sleeping in encampments" must be** offered anyone before requesting that they move away from living on public property;

WHEREAS homelessness is felt most at the level of local government and the residents that they serve;

WHEREAS municipalities and District Social Administration Boards are doing their part, but do not have the resources, capacity or tools to address this complex challenge; and,

WHEREAS leadership and urgent action is needed from the provincial government on an emergency basis to develop, resource, and implement a comprehensive plan to prevent, reduce and ultimately end homelessness in Ontario,

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the City of Cambridge calls on the Provincial Government to urgently:

- a. Acknowledge that homelessness in Ontario is a social, economic, and health crisis;
- b. Commit to ending homelessness in Ontario;
- c. Work with the Association of Municipalities of Ontario (AMO) and a broad range of community, health, Indigenous and economic partners to develop, resource, and implement an action plan to achieve this goal.
- d. Provide new and immediate provincial funding support for the development of **available, low barrier, truly accessible spaces to accommodate the homeless population equating to “adequate safe alternatives to sleeping in encampments”**;
- e. Provide new and immediate provincial funding for supportive housing providers that are focused on the homeless in the most need.
- f. Provide new and immediate provincial funding support to municipalities **for the development of available, low barrier, truly accessible spaces to accommodate the homeless population equating to “adequate safe alternatives to sleeping in encampments”** with provided funding to be used for providing **“wraparound” rehabilitative and health services necessary to the proper functioning of such facilities.**

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this motion be sent to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services; the Minister of Health, the Official Opposition at Queen’s Park and the Association of Ontario (AMO) and all Ontario Municipalities.