

Dear Mayor Tory,

We, the undersigned, have worked together to present to you a path forward to ensure that the actions taken by the City to remove people from Trinity-Bellwoods Park on Tuesday June 22<sup>nd</sup>, 2021, are never repeated. Using armed police officers on horseback and in riot gear to remove residents who are vulnerable to Toronto's unaffordable housing market due to inadequate social supports, has no place in a caring, compassionate society. Instead, we must commit to taking a human rights compliant approach toward housing encampment residents that is co-created with encampment residents.

A tent in a park is no one's first option, and we understand that parks cannot be a permanent housing solution. However, the forcible removal of encampment residents must end. This inflicts further trauma on already vulnerable Torontonians and does not address the issues you are trying to solve. This approach just relocates people to another park, underneath a bridge, or, worse, back to an unsafe living situation that led them to a tent in the first place.

We believe there is a better way.

A coalition of Torontonians, including those with lived experience in encampments and shelters, housing advocates and experts, civic leaders, former mayors, and your colleagues on Council, have worked together to present the following recommendations we strongly urge you to present at the July 14<sup>th</sup> meeting of City Council.

### **A Human Rights Compliant Approach toward Residents in Encampments:**

1. Reconsider the motion moved by Councillor Layton at Council on June 8<sup>th</sup>, 2021 to provide safe indoor shelter and housing opportunities for residents of encampments that ensures the safety and dignity of encampment residents and frontline staff. This should be done using a collaborative approach that includes consultation with relevant staff, organizations serving the homeless population and focused on the right to housing and, most importantly, residents with lived experience of homelessness.
2. Ensure that all City directed activity and programs related to encampment abide by the [National Protocol for Homeless Encampments in Canada](#).
3. Recognize that residents are rights-holders who have the ability to make informed decisions regarding their housing/living situation without threat of criminalization, or the use of coercive tactics or force.
  - This includes an immediate end to the display and use of police force and military tactics, including 'kettling', in encampments to intimidate, threaten, coerce, or enforce the displacement of residents.
4. Meaningful engagement with encampment residents and relevant organizations serving unhoused people to assist with navigating options regarding indoor space and housing.

- Residents must be presented with full information regarding indoor space/housing options, and have the ability to choose a space appropriate for them. In order to ensure adequacy, residents should also be allowed to request reasonable changes to indoor space/housing options on offer;
- Residents should not be subject to harassment or intimidation. They should receive appropriate supports until an indoor space/housing option has been freely selected.

5. Upholding the specific recommendations of the Faulkner Inquest, as per Council's commitment on June 8<sup>th</sup>, and enhancing the provision of resources and supports to people residing in encampments *where they are located*.

6. In order to ensure coherence with the shelter, hotel, and temporary accommodations offered and noting that residents of encampments often move inside and out of both encampments and temporary accommodation, management of the encampment file should be held under the Shelter, Support, and Housing Administration as opposed to Emergency Management Services. Emergency services should only be interacting with encampments on an as-needed basis, in the same way as they interact with the general population.

### **Providing a Safer and More Welcoming Space for Shelter Residents:**

7. Recognize that shelters, at present, aren't necessarily a safer option for unhoused Torontonians by reconsidering the motion moved by Councillor Josh Matlow on June 8<sup>th</sup>:

- Review of existing advisory groups to Shelter, Support, and Housing Administration and establish an advisory committee of current and past shelter clients to provide advice to improve shelter operations for clients;
- Review of existing shelter and respite standards and operational practices to further enhance opportunities to provide a more welcoming environment, including, but not limited to, allowing food in room;
- Review policies that restrict shelter access, including service restrictions, for reasons that are not direct threats to the health and safety of clients or staff, provide support to help clients meet shelter expectations, and ensure that restrictions are reviewed centrally to ensure transparency and accountability;
- Ensure that clients are able to meet with a housing and health care worker within the first week of arrival to understand their needs and develop a housing and health care plan;
- Independent audits of shelter operations to ensure the city's shelter and respite policies are followed and that clients are regularly surveyed regarding their access to housing and health supports, and for feedback upon discharge;
- Ensure that clients are able to sleep and have privacy by reviewing and providing guidance on how to conduct "bed-checks" in a manner that respects client dignity and privacy while ensuring effective shelter operations;
- Provide supports to ensure nutritious meals are available for clients, as per their specific dietary needs and restrictions; and

- Affirm and ensure that the City's policy to not permit strangers to be placed in a shared room together in shelter hotels and that clients have eligible possessions put in storage is adhered to and communicated to relevant stakeholders.

8. To encourage encampment residents to accept indoor spaces, further enhance the services and supports on-site, including:

- The provision of accessible and low-barrier harm reduction services, including Supervised Consumption Sites and Safe Supply, on location at all shelter sites;
- The provision of accessible, on-site healthcare services in partnership with healthcare agencies at all shelter locations;
- The provision of enhanced and consistent IPAC measures and staff training at all shelter locations;
- Appropriate accommodations for people living with disability specific to their individual health needs;
- More specific spaces and services appropriate to people's identities, understanding that Indigenous, Black, and trans people are overrepresented among people experiencing homelessness;
- Ensuring the safety and security of people's belongings, including their tents and sleeping bags.

9. The provision of full information on available shelter sites and greater transparency around the shelter system as a whole, including:

- The provision of location information, location photos, and any other relevant information regarding available shelter space as part of an offer of indoor space, and responding in full to questions and concerns regarding on-site amenities and services at specific shelter locations;
- Public updates around outbreaks of COVID-19, tuberculosis, Group A Streptococcus, and other communicable diseases within the shelter system, with outbreak sites identified by name.

10. Ensuring that shelter capacity does not exceed 90% so that space is readily available for any and all unhoused people seeking a shelter bed, understanding that the shelter system is an emergency service that must be available for anyone that needs it.

11. Ensuring a full transition plan to be presented to Council by October 2021 detailing next steps pending the expiry of shelter-hotel leases. This plan must be made in consultation with relevant organizations serving the unhoused population and unhoused people.

### **Moving Forward — toward permanent housing:**

12. Through practice at the City and advocacy to senior levels of government, move away from actions that simply maintain the unaffordable private market, such as rent

supplements, or rent banks. These measures should not be a primary component of Toronto's affordable housing plan and should only be used in emergency situations.

13. Purpose-built, Rent-Geared-to-Income housing should be the City's primary focus for affordable housing as the majority of people who are, have, or will experience homelessness are simply unable to afford rent, and are not chronically homeless.

14. Supportive housing is an important component, especially for people living with some forms of disability, mental health diagnosis, etc. Supports should be geared toward individual needs.

15. Eviction prevention needs further enhancement — people entering into housing from homelessness should have support to build and maintain an eviction prevention plan for six months to one year; as well, to lessen the number of people experiencing homelessness in Toronto overall, the City should invest in upstream solutions like housing, but also drop-ins and housing help supports.

Thank you for your attention to this important matter that deeply affects residents of encampments, shelters, and their family and friends across Toronto that care about their future. We hope you will present and support the above measures at the next meeting of Council.

Sincerely,

## **Organizations**

Accessible Housing Network

All Saints Church-Community Centre

Anishnawbe Health Toronto

Black Coalition for AIDS Prevention

Church of St. Stephen-in-the-Fields

Church of the Epiphany and St. Mark

Church of the Redeemer — The Common Table

Davenport Mutual Aid Network

Davenport Perth Neighbourhood and Community Health Centre

Encampment Support Network

Fagdemic

Federation of Metro Tenants' Associations

Fontbonne Ministries

Friends of Ruby

Good to Be Good Foundation

Green Party of Ontario  
Health Providers Against Poverty  
Homeless Connect Toronto  
Indigenous Peoples Solidarity Group, St. Matthew's United Church  
Inner City Family Health Team  
Inner City Health Associates  
Native Women's Resource Centre of Toronto  
Neighbourhood Pods TO  
North York Community House  
Ontario Coalition Against Poverty  
Osgoode Environmental Justice Clinic  
Parkdale Activity-Recreation Centre  
Parkdale Queen West Community Health Centre  
Progress Toronto  
Queers Crash the Beat  
Ralph Thornton Community Centre  
Regent Park Community Health Centre  
Right to Housing Toronto  
Sanctuary  
Seeds of Hope Foundation  
Showing Up for Racial Justice — Toronto  
Sistering  
Social Justice & Advocacy Committee — Anglican Diocese of Toronto  
Social Planning Toronto  
South Riverdale Community Health Centre  
Spadina-Fort York Community Care  
Street Health  
Street Nurses Network  
Syme Woolner Neighbourhood and Family Centre  
The Neighbourhood Group Community Services  
The Stop Community Food Centre  
Toronto Drop-in Network  
Toronto Harm Reduction Alliance  
Toronto Indigenous Harm Reduction

Toronto Neighbourhood Centres  
Toronto Overdose Prevention Society  
Toronto Prisoners' Rights Project  
Toronto Raging Grannies  
Toronto Tiny Shelters  
Unitarian Commons  
Ve'ahavta  
Voices of Scarborough (Scarborough Residents and Tenants)  
Warden Woods Community Centre  
West Neighbourhood House  
West Scarborough Community Legal Services  
Working For Change

### **Community Leaders and Academics**

Abe Oudshoorn, Associate Professor, Nursing, Western University; Managing Editor, International Journal on Homelessness

Alexandra Flynn, Assistant Professor, Peter A. Allard School of Law, University of British Columbia

Alison Kemper, Former Co-chair, Advisory Committee on Homeless and Socially Isolated Persons, City of Toronto

Andrew Boozary, MD, SM

Andrew Lohead, Activist / Artist (Rename Dundas Street); PhD Candidate, X University

Anna Willats, Coordinator / Professor, George Brown College

Bob Rose, Mental Health / Homeless Recovery Advocate

Bri Gardner, Housing Advocate

Cathy Crowe, Street Nurse

David Hulchanski, Professor, Housing and Community Development, University of Toronto

Dianne Saxe, Environmental Commissioner of Ontario (2015 – 2019)

Dr. Adriana Di Stefano (MD, CFPC), Steering Committee Member, Health Providers Against Poverty

Drew Silverthorn, (MSW, BSW, RSW), Community Mental Health Social Worker / Chair, Health Providers Against Poverty (2020)

Eric Paul Weissman, Assistant Professor, Social Science, University of New Brunswick; Activist / Filmmaker

Estair Van Wagner, Associate Professor, Osgoode Hall Law School, York University

Griffin Epstein, Professor, Social Service Work, George Brown College  
Jennifer Hollett, Community Leader  
John Caffery, Activist / Artist (Hall of Justice); Professor, George Brown College  
John Clarke, Packer Visitor in Social Justice, York University  
John Sewell, Mayor of Toronto (1978 – 1980)  
John Stapleton, Principal, Open Policy Ontario  
John van Nostrand, Architect, Planner and Housing Developer  
Lauren Bulckaert, Professor, Addiction and Mental Health Work, Centennial College  
Lynne Brennan, Professor, Community Worker Program, George Brown College  
Martine August, Assistant Professor, School of Planning, University of Waterloo  
Melissa Goldstein, Housing Advocate  
Naheed Dosani, MD  
Nahum Mann, Community Organizer  
Nathan Stall, MD, FRCPC  
Olivia Chow, MP (2006 – 2014)  
Rabbi Jordan Helfman, Holy Blossom Temple  
Rev. Dr. Cheri DiNovo, MPP (2006 – 2017); Minister, Trinity-St. Paul's Centre for Faith, Justice, and the Arts  
Rev. Dr. Jason McKinney, Church of the Epiphany and St. Mark  
Rev. Dr. John Joseph Mastandrea, Manor Road United Church, Toronto  
Roger Hollander, Toronto Councillor for Don River (1987 – 1994)  
Rusa Jeremic, Professor, Community Worker Program, George Brown College  
Sarah Rehou, MS, Housing Advocate  
Shiri Pasternak, Assistant Professor, Criminology, X University  
Terra Gillespie, Community Activist  
Tommy Taylor, Frontline Shelter Worker / Community Safety and Well-being Consultant  
William Payne, Contract Faculty, Faculty of Environmental and Urban Change, York University

### **Artists and Musicians**

Aerin Fogel, Artistic Director, Venus Fest  
Akash Banal, DJ (Tender Buttons)  
Alex Baigent, Musician (Westlaken)  
Amanda Crist, Musician (Ice Cream)

Andrew Wilson, Musician (Sahara)  
Andy Shauf, Musician  
Anna May Henry, Artist  
Annie Koyama, Publisher, Koyama Press  
April Aliermo, Musician (Phèdre)  
Ardene Shapiro, Musician  
Brendo Black, Musician / Cinematographer  
Carlyn Bezic, Musician (Jane Inc.)  
Carmen Yanuziello, Musician (Carmen Elle / gay hollywood)  
Charlotte Cornfield, Musician  
Chris de Castro, Designer (Hand Eye Society); Board Member (Wavelength)  
Cindy Li, DJ / Producer (Ciel / Discwoman)  
Clara Engel, Musician  
Daniel Hanna, CEO, Eyesore Cinema Ltd.  
Daniel Hartrell, Musician / Creative Director  
Daniel Lee, Musician (Phèdre)  
David Dacks, Executive Director, The Music Gallery  
David Lush, Musician (Analytica / Memorex)  
David Psutka, Musician (Halocline Trance)  
Diana Lynn VanderMeulen, Visual Artist  
Dr. Henry Warwick, Composer; Assistant Professor, RTA School of Media, X University  
Edan Scime Stokell, Musician (Sahara)  
Emma Kulcsar, Interior Designer  
Gabe Knox, Musician (Gabe Knox / Analytica)  
Harley Haskett, Musician / Graphic Designer  
Hayden Desser, Musician (Hayden)  
Hayley Elsaesser, Fashion Designer  
Henri Fabergé, Performing Artist  
Isla Craig, Musician  
James Harris, Video Editor / Musician (Cosmic Resonance)  
Janina Kiersnowski, Filmmaker / DJ  
Jay Anderson, Musician (Badge Époque Ensemble)  
Jay Cheel, Filmmaker  
Jeffrey Dupuis, Novelist; Editor, The Quarantine Review



Jesse Crowe, Musician (Praises / Beliefs)  
Jesse Laderoute, Musician (Blonde Elvis / Catholic Wilt)  
Jesse Wick, Musician / Artist  
Jessica Kaera Cho, Musician (Korea Town Acid)  
Joel Lee, Designer  
Jon Bartlett, Director, Kelp Management  
Jon Schouten, Co-owner, Telephone Explosion Records  
Jonathan Pappo, Musician (Scott Hardware / No Frills / Elrichman / Context / NA)  
Jordan Seccareccia, Musician (Westlaken)  
Joshua McGuirk, Artist / DJ / Musician; Producer, MTV / Much Music  
Julia Dickens, DJ / Artist (The Loving Echo)  
Julian Taylor, Musician (Julian Taylor Band)  
Karen Ng, Musician; Co-founder, TONE Festival  
Karla Hauser, Visual Artist / DJ  
Kat Estacio, Artist / Musician (Pantayo)  
Kate McIntosh, Event Organizer, On Earth  
Katrina Estacio, Musician (Pantayo)  
Kevin Drew, Musician (Broken Social Scene)  
Kritty Uranowski, Musician (Lavender Bruisers)  
Laura Elliott, DJ (Loxxe)  
Lido Pimienta, Musician  
Linus Booth, Musician  
Lisa Conway, Artist/Musician (L CON)  
Liz Hysen, Musician  
Lucas Temor, Musician (Westlaken)  
Ludovic Bacs, DJ (Immigrant Muscle)  
Lukas Switlicki, Event Organizer, City Dance Initiative  
Lyndsey Gallant, Art Director  
Maev Beaty, Theatre Artist  
Matt King, Musician (Absolutely Free)  
Maximilian Turnbull, Musician (Badge Époque Ensemble)  
Meg Remy, Musician (U.S. Girls)  
Michael DeForge, Illustrator  
Michael Edward Barry, DJ / Musician (The Robotic Kid / The Hidden Cameras)

Michael Rancic, Freelance Music Journalist  
Mike Haliechuk, Musician (Fucked Up)  
Mingjia Chen, Musician  
Nathan Heuvingh, Curatorial and Programming Lead (Myseum of Toronto); Musician (Bad River)  
Nathan Jurevicius, Illustrator  
Nikki Little, Musician  
Nimit Malavia, Illustrator  
Nyssa Rosaleen, Musician (Nyssa)  
Olivia Statler, Art Therapist, Plum Blossom Mindful Arts  
Peter Kuplowsky, Producer / Film Curator (Midnight Madness)  
Raf Reza, DJ / Producer  
Riaz Charania, Marketing Manager (Myseum of Toronto)  
Rob McLay, Musician (Westlaken)  
Robin Dann, Musician (Bernice)  
Rollie Pemberton, Musician (Cadence Weapon)  
S.Marshall Dragert, Producer / Performer / Organizer (Menla)  
Sachin Mohindra, Musician (Short Bloom)  
Sanjeet Takhar, Artistic Director, Music Gallery  
Sarah Tumaliuan, MPH (Dalla Lana School of Public Health); Arts, Culture, and Heritage Worker (Myseum of Toronto / Parks N' Wreck)  
Serena Ryder, Musician  
Shamanta Chandran, Musician (WeTurnToRed)  
Shary Boyle, Artist; Honorary Doctor of Fine Arts, Ontario College of Art and Design University  
Shaun Bowring, Owner (The Garrison / Baby G); Co-chair, Toronto Music Advisory Committee (TMAC)  
Sheryl Lindsay, Community Worker / Musician  
Sophia Ruby Katz, Writer / Artist / Musician (Ferrari Garden, Jasmine Rivers)  
Stephen Lambke, Musician (Constantines); Arts Administrator  
Tamara Lindeman, Musician (The Weather Station)  
Tim Shannon, DJ / Music Programmer  
Troy Jackson, Musician  
Tyler Clark Burke, Artist  
Vaughn Robert Squire, DJ / Musician (Sixtoo)  
Victoria Cheong, Musician (New Chance)