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\textsuperscript{nd}, 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\textsuperscript{th} 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\textsuperscript{th}, 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.
   
   o 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 8th, 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 8th:

- 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
o 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:

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

   o 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;
   o 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 Lochead, 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
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
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)