

## COUNCIL MEMBER'S MOTION

### 1. Emergency COVID-19 Relief for Unsheltered Vancouver Residents

Submitted by: Mayor Stewart

#### WHEREAS

1. Caring for all community residents during the COVID-19 public health emergency is a joint responsibility of all levels of government;
2. The 2020 Metro Vancouver preliminary homeless count found in Vancouver 547 people living unsheltered on the City's streets, with 1,548 people with no fixed address living in sheltered locations;
3. Many unsheltered residents are vulnerable people with underlying health issues such as mental illness and addiction;
4. A disproportionately high number of unsheltered residents are Indigenous people - many of whom are survivors of residential schools and other deplorable vestiges of our colonial past;
5. The policy responses to the COVID-19 pandemic such as physical distancing and other measures have left many marginalized people in precarious living conditions;
6. The recent spike in COVID-19 cases, a toxic illicit drug supply escalating overdoses, and the coming colder weather require urgent action to provide unsheltered residents safer short- and long-term shelter options and improved access to sanitation, health, and social services; and
7. The estimated 300 residents living unsheltered in Strathcona Park are at increasing risk in terms of health and violence and the current encampment does not have the facilities or services to accommodate long-term habitation.

#### THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT

- A. City Staff report back to Council by or before October 2 on the feasibility and costs of the following three options to accelerate the creation of emergency housing for homeless Vancouver residents:
  - Option 1: Leasing or purchasing housing units including hotels, single-room occupancy residences, and other available housing stock;
  - Option 2: Establishing a temporary emergency relief encampment on vacant public or private land; and
  - Option 3: Temporarily converting City-owned buildings into emergency housing or shelter space.

- B. City of Vancouver staff work with other partner agencies to outline supportive services for each option including overdose prevention, access to safer supply, other health services such as COVID-19 testing facilities, as well as culturally-appropriate services with emphasis on Indigenous traditions of healing and wellness.
- C. Once approved by council, City staff work with BC Housing and other government and non-profit agencies to invite unsheltered residents to move into housing units or shelter spaces, then to more permanent housing, as it becomes available.
- D. Staff also work with BC Housing and other government departments and agencies to secure long-term housing options for unsheltered residents, including and purchasing and refurbishing single-room occupancy residences or other available housing stock.
- E. Staff work to expedite the necessary planning approval of the 450 modular housing units recently and jointly announced with the Province.
- F. Staff work with the Province to expedite the newly announced navigation centre.
- G. On behalf of Council, the Mayor request federal and provincial funding to cover all associated costs for implementation of any or all of the options City Council approves.

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