

## COUNCIL MEMBER'S MOTION

### 2. **Response to Options Requested by Council on Emergency COVID-19 Relief for Unsheltered Vancouver Residents**

Submitted by Mayor Stewart

#### WHEREAS

1. The impacts of the COVID-19 Pandemic have magnified and disproportionately impacted vulnerable people experiencing homelessness or at risk of homelessness, and supportive social services and emergency shelters that serve these populations have had to reduce capacity due to COVID-19;
2. The impacts of COVID-19 now overlap with the overdose public health crisis, creating two ongoing and potentially fatal health crises within Vancouver's communities;
3. The Federal Government has announced two new streams of emergency housing funds: the Rapid Housing Initiative (RHI) and the expanded Reaching Home program;
4. The Provincial Government has committed to delivering 1,500 units of social housing in Vancouver, with accompanying operating services, and have moved unsheltered residents from Oppenheimer Park into provincial social housing units;
5. Despite these positive federal and provincial initiatives, no funding is immediately available to the City of Vancouver to provide emergency COVID-19 relief for unsheltered Vancouver residents;
6. Residents living in Strathcona, the West End, Yaletown, Crosstown, Gastown, Chinatown, the Downtown Eastside, Mount Pleasant, and Grandview Woodlands and other areas of the city are still experiencing higher-than-usual levels of street homelessness and are demanding solutions in the form of services and housing options for their vulnerable neighbours;
7. The staff memorandum to Council dated October 2, 2020, entitled "Response to Council Motion: Emergency COVID-19 Relief for Unsheltered Vancouver Residents (RTS: 014069)", contains information and analysis on the feasibility of options for housing the estimated 750 unsheltered residents living in Vancouver, including cost, expediency, anticipated uptake, space attributes, likely

partnership with senior government, and potential impacts on the health and housing outcomes; and

8. The staff memorandum determined the options that scored the highest across costs, expediency, uptake, space attributes, and likely partnerships with senior government were:
  - a. Vacant apartment buildings;
  - b. Vacant commercial hotels or other buildings; and/or,
  - c. Vacant single-room occupancy buildings.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED

THAT, to provide emergency COVID-19 relief for unsheltered Vancouver residents, Council will:

1. Subject to all relevant Council policies, the *Vancouver Charter* and by-law requirements, direct staff to lease or purchase housing units including those found in:
  - a. Vacant apartment buildings;
  - b. Vacant commercial hotels or other buildings; and/or
  - c. Vacant single-room occupancy buildings.
2. Allocate up to \$30 million to execute these actions and provide wraparound services;
3. Direct the Mayor to pursue senior government funding to support the work of City Council outlined above and to provide additional housing and wraparound services; and
4. Direct staff to provide regular progress reports.