

COUNCIL MEMBERS' MOTION

3. Considering Youth Housing Needs within the City's Housing Strategy

Submitted by: Councillor Dominato

WHEREAS

1. The *Housing Vancouver Strategy* sets out to address street homelessness and enable more affordable housing choices, ensuring a diverse and vibrant city;
2. The City of Vancouver Housing Strategy embodies policies and various directions to staff relating to the needs of specific population groups within the city. For example, policies that enable MIRHPPs where 20 percent of the housing is for a certain income range, social housing where 30 percent is at the HILs rate and the remainder at market housing rates, and supportive housing models that come forward at the will of various organizations per their specific area of interest and/or need;
3. BC Housing has identified six sub-populations of youth who are overrepresented in the larger homeless population. These six sub-populations of homeless youth would benefit from a range of housing models identified by BC Housing and youth-serving agencies; ⁱ
4. According to the 2020 Homeless Count, youth made up 9% of all identified homeless residents in the City of Vancouver while 36 percent are/were in the care of the Province (MCFD) as a child or youth. This data shows that there are gaps in supports for youth aging out of care as well as gaps due to the on-going impacts of systemic racism;
5. Each year in Vancouver, approximately 100 youth age out of government care and/or youth agreements at the age of 19 years. For many youth in care, *aging out* comes with fear and anxiety as they try to figure out how they will meet their basic needs including housing, while losing services, support, and connections;
6. With reference to concerns relating to the issue of youth aging out of MCFD care who are at risk of homelessness, Mayor and Council received a letter on behalf of the TRRUST Collective (Transition in Resources, Relationships, and Understanding Support Together) in November 2020 regarding youth housing needs and challenges; ⁱⁱ
7. Detailed engagement of former youth in care by TRRUST regarding their personal journeys reflects the benefits that come from supportive housing, but also highlights housing barriers owing to the cost of rent, unsafe housing, and stigma;
8. The *Fostering Changes'* report, *Opportunities in Transition*, notes that most young people aged 20 to 24 have low incomes and tend to rely on family for additional financial support. In fact, 60 percent of youth in this age range live in their parental homes. Youth aging out of care do not have that option and often

lack the financial resources to meet basic needs, including difficulty finding housing in their community due to the Vancouver housing crisis, and often end up couch surfing or homeless and living on the street;

9. The Representative for Children and Youth's 2020 Report entitled *A Parent's Duty: Government's Obligation to Youth Transitioning into Adulthood*, recommends the Province provide additional dedicated housing for youth aging out of care through a plan led by B.C. Housing to end youth homelessness, with particular attention to youth transitioning out of care;
10. While the *Housing Vancouver Strategy* acknowledges youth are at higher risk of homelessness, informal queries to City staff suggest that the City does not have any specific or defined youth housing targets in the City's housing strategy;
11. There is an opportunity for Council and the City of Vancouver to define and adopt policies that could enable housing providers to respond to youth housing needs and create and/or otherwise set aside housing units appropriate and specific to youth needs.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT Council alert and advise staff – by way of this motion – of Council's interest in examining the question of youth housing needs, within the city's larger housing needs spectrum, and considering these needs as part of the City's policy and planning processes;

FURTHER THAT Council direct staff to keep Council apprised of specific opportunities and proposals for youth housing that could be enabled within the City's existing housing policy structures, including specific advice from staff regarding mechanisms to enable opportunities for housing providers to set aside units specific to youth, and direction to staff to include exploration of youth housing as part of future housing updates and reports to Council.

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ⁱ Youth Subpopulations: LGBTQ2S+ Youth, Indigenous Youth, Youth Aging out of Care, Youth with High Acuity Mental Health Challenges, Youth in Active Substance Use, and Youth in Recovery from Substance Use. (<https://www.bchousing.org/research-centre/library/tools-for-developing-social-housing/BK-Summary-Vulnerable-Youth-Young-Adults-BC>)

ⁱⁱ The TRRUST Collective (Transition in Resources, Relationships, and Understanding Support Together) is composed of over 60 organizations and 250 members, including non-profit organizations, government agencies, and young people with lived experience of government care (<https://www.mcs.bc.ca/trrust>). The common interest of all TRRUST members is to achieve system-wide improvements in the outcomes for youth transitioning out of government care in Vancouver, British Columbia.