



TO: The Regional Chair and members of Regional Council

RE: Affordable Housing and Homelessness Crisis

DATE: May 8, 2023

The Peel Alliance to End Homelessness is providing this letter of support for the Region’s Housing Service’s request to enhance supports for street homelessness (Item 13.2).

With a lack of deeply affordable housing, growing encampments and emergency shelters in overflow, people without shelter are experiencing a crisis of epic proportions. We have seen through the encampment survey and report conducted by Peel Poverty Action Group in the winter of 2022 (Homeless Hub 2023), that there is dire need for an increase of wrap-around supports for unsheltered individuals. Adding a second street outreach team will help alleviate the pressure on existing outreach teams and provide more support to the unsheltered in Cooksville, Port Credit and around the Wilkinson Shelter in Brampton.

We agree with Regional staff that redesigning a placed-based needs outreach program should not come at the expense of much-needed investments in homelessness prevention and permanent housing solutions and that addressing the affordable housing crisis is a priority for Regional Council.

Additionally, the Peel Alliance encourages members of Council to commit to future recommendations brought forth by Regional staff that address the findings presented at the Regional Council Education Session, regarding the affordable housing and homelessness crisis.

Reducing and ending homelessness must be a council of term priority and the 2024 budget should reflect that priority. People on our streets, in shelter and in precarious situations such as hidden homelessness are suffering and, in some cases, dying from lack of access to basic needs. While we recognize that increased funding is required from federal and provincial governments, we can no longer sit back and wait for things to change. PAEH and its community partners are ready to work with the Region in a whole of community system response. Change is required to save lives and deliver better services as well as healthcare and housing for the most vulnerable community members in Peel. This will also require political will and action.

PAEH believes that housing is a human right and that we need to apply this and an equity lens to policy decisions and practices. We also need to implement other practices such as Housing First, a recovery-oriented approach to ending homelessness that centers on quickly moving people experiencing homelessness into independent and permanent housing and then providing additional supports and services as needed.

Finally, the Alliance want to emphasize the importance of the Region working with multiple stakeholders including people with lived experience, agencies, housing providers, healthcare experts, public institutions, businesses, emergency services and community groups to plan and implement solutions to end homelessness.

Sincerely,

Peel Alliance to End Homelessness

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