

Motion

Agenda Number: 20.2
Date: March 21, 2024

Moved by Councillor Santos
Seconded by Mayor Brown

Whereas Canada is experiencing record population growth, having welcomed 1.25 million new Canadians last year alone;

And whereas, according to the Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation (CMHC) at least 3.5 million additional homes need to be built by 2030, and municipalities need to build or expand the infrastructure to accommodate this growth;

And whereas, the growing costs of living, population growth, underfunding of support for mental health and addictions, lack of investment in infrastructure, the housing crisis and resulting growth in encampments sites are just some of the challenges faced by municipalities;

And whereas, municipalities have been at the forefront of supporting populations facing homelessness including asylum claimants and refugees and providing essential settlement and housing services;

And whereas, homeless encampments in the Region of Peel are growing, and exacerbated by the asylum claimant crisis;

And whereas, asylum claimants comprise 71 per cent of shelter users, the average shelter occupancy rate is currently 349 per cent, and Peel is now operating 11 overflow hotels;

And whereas, Peel Region is experiencing the second largest influx of asylum seekers in Ontario yet it lacks the dedicated Federal funding allocations Toronto has received;

And whereas, the growing number of encampments in local parks have led to significant community safety risks to residents (housed and unhoused), businesses, staff and first responders, due to large amounts of debris, recurring open-air fires, illegal substance abuse, illegal drug activity, and theft;

And whereas, in October 2023, direction was given to Regional staff to work with staff from the Cities of Brampton, Mississauga and the Town of Caledon in developing an “encampment protocol and policy” and report back to Council in Q1 2024;

And whereas, local property taxes cannot pay for all of the necessary public infrastructure and support services to build housing and support increased population growth, and municipal budgets are further strained as we mitigate the consequences of homelessness with band-aid solutions;

And whereas, leadership and urgent action is needed from the federal government to develop a comprehensive plan to end chronic homelessness in Ontario, with linkages to public infrastructure and support service needs that adequately support population growth;

Therefore, be it resolved:

1. That the Region of Peel join advocacy efforts of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities (FCM) to the federal government to deliver a housing and homelessness plan in consultation with municipalities,

provinces, and stakeholders that includes supporting infrastructure to service new housing units, and renews a commitment to invest in complete neighbourhoods; and

2. That the Region of Peel join advocacy efforts of FCM which calls on the federal government to work with municipalities to maintain the Canada Community Building Fund as a source of direct, predictable, long-term funding for local infrastructure priorities; and
3. That the Region of Peel's Outreach team uphold interim and future encampment policy and protocols alongside local park by-laws to prioritize transition to available shelter and the safety for surrounding residents (housed and unhoused), businesses, cleanliness in local parks, and work with the local the municipality and Peel Police to prevent illegal activity or substance abuse in local parks; and
4. That the Region of Peel advocate to the Federal government to provide allocation-based funding attached to each asylum seeker arriving in Peel, whereby, moving to an allocation-based funding model is more cost effective and allows for the design of purpose-built, proactive supports; and
5. That the Region of Peel report back to Regional Council on barriers identified by shelter users in accessing Peel's emergency shelter system and potential solutions with associated costs.

Regional Chair