

<small>FOR OFFICE USE ONLY</small>		Attention: Regional Clerk Regional Municipality of Peel 10 Peel Centre Drive, Suite A Brampton, ON L6T 4B9 Phone: 905-791-7800 ext. 4582 E-mail: council@peelregion.ca	
MEETING DATE YYYY/MM/DD 2024/03/21	MEETING NAME Regional Council		
DATE SUBMITTED YYYY/MM/DD 2024/03/07			
NAME OF INDIVIDUAL(S) Michelle Bilek			
POSITION(S)/TITLE(S) Commnity Member and Founder			
NAME OF ORGANIZATION(S) Peel Alliance to End Homelessness and Founding member of Peel Poverty Action Group, and Real People Collaboration			
E-MAIL [REDACTED]@michelle@realpeoplecollaboration.ca		TELEPHONE NUMBER [REDACTED]	EXTENSION
INDIVIDUAL(S) OR ORGANIZATION(S) ADDRESS [REDACTED]			
REASON(S) FOR DELEGATION REQUEST (SUBJECT MATTER TO BE DISCUSSED) Encampments			
A formal presentation will accompany my delegation <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No Presentation format: <input type="checkbox"/> PowerPoint File (.ppt) <input type="checkbox"/> Adobe File or Equivalent (.pdf) <input type="checkbox"/> Picture File (.jpg) <input type="checkbox"/> Video File (.avi,.mpg) <input type="checkbox"/> Other <input type="text"/>			
Additional printed information/materials will be distributed with my delegation : <input checked="" type="checkbox"/> Yes <input type="checkbox"/> No <input type="checkbox"/> Attached			

Please save the form to your personal device, then complete and submit via email attachment to council@peelregion.ca

Note:

Delegates are requested to provide an electronic copy of all background material / presentations to the Clerk's Division if possible 72 hours prior to the meeting start time. **Delegation requests and/or materials received after 9:30 a.m. on the Wednesday prior to the meeting will not be provided to Members.**

Delegates should make every effort to ensure their presentation material is prepared in an accessible format. Once the above information is received in the Clerk's Division, you will be contacted by Legislative Services staff to confirm your placement on the appropriate agenda.

In accordance with the Region of Peel Procedure By-law, delegates appearing before Regional Council or Committee are requested to limit their remarks to 5 minutes and 10 minutes respectively (approximately 5/10 slides). Delegations may only appear once on the same matter within a one-year period, unless a recommendation pertaining to the same matter is included on the agenda within the one-year period and only to provide additional or new information.

Notice with Respect to the Collection of Personal Information
(Municipal Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act)

Personal information contained on this form is authorized under Section 4.4 of the Region of Peel Procedure By-law 27-2022, as amended, for the purpose of contacting individuals and/or organizations requesting an opportunity to appear as a delegation before Regional Council or a Committee of Council. The completed Delegation Request Form will be redacted and published with the public agenda. The Procedure By-law is a requirement of Section 238(2) of the Municipal Act, 2001, as amended. Please note that all meetings are open to the public except where permitted to be closed to the public under legislated authority. All Regional Council and Committee meetings are live streamed via the internet and meeting videos are posted and available for viewing subsequent to those meetings. Questions about collection may be directed to the Manager of Legislative Services, 10 Peel Centre Drive, Suite A, 5th floor, Brampton, ON L6T 4B9, (905) 791-7800 ext. 4462.

Region of Peel Council
General Council meeting
March 21, 2024

March 11, 2024

Greetings Chair and Council members,

I am writing this letter in support of the delegations that support that of the Office of the Federal Housing Advocate, and the Federal Housing Advocates Encampment Report.

A growing number of people in Peel Region are having to live in tents or informal shelters to survive due to a lack of affordable housing, limited support services, and nowhere safe to go.

There has been a significant rise in encampments in the last five years, and particularly since the COVID-19 pandemic. Encampments are now being reported across the country – in both large and small municipalities, as well as in more rural areas.

At the same time, encampments represent an effort by people who are unhoused to claim their human right to housing and meet their most basic needs for shelter. For reasons discussed in this report, encampments are often people's only housing option, or the only option that meets their needs for safety, security and dignity. Many encampment residents have highlighted the sense of community they experienced when living in an encampment with others facing similar struggles.

Recognizing the severity of this crisis, the Federal Housing Advocate launched a systemic review of encampments in February 2023. This systemic review has been carried out pursuant to subsection 13.1(1) of the National Housing Strategy Act.

In October 2023, the Advocate published an [interim report](#) setting out the context of the crisis and documenting in detail what had been heard through the engagement process. The engagement process consulted directly with people living in encampments, local community advocates, Indigenous governments and representative organizations, and duty-bearers across all governments.

This final report found here: <https://www.housingchrc.ca/en/publications/upholding-dignity-and-human-rights-federal-housing-advocates-review-homeless> includes the Advocate's conclusions about the factors leading to the rise in encampments and, most importantly, the concrete measures that must be taken by all governments to fulfill their human rights responsibilities in order to reduce or eliminate the need for encampments.

What has emerged is a clear picture of many human rights crises.

First, encampment residents are at dire risk of harm due to the failure to uphold their basic rights.

Second, the encampments exist only because of a larger, systemic failure to uphold the right of all people to adequate housing without discrimination.

The engagement process made it clear that Canada and our Region, has the capacity to solve this crisis. Encampment residents are acutely aware of the measures required to meet their most pressing needs. **What is lacking is sufficient political will, resources and coordination.**

The absence of effective coordination between the many agencies, departments and jurisdictions involved limits the effectiveness of responses to the homelessness crisis. While municipalities are on the frontlines in responding to encampments, we know that we don't have all the powers and resources they need to provide human rights-based services. Provinces and territories must work closely with municipalities and the federal government must play a leadership role.

The Federal Housing Advocate is recommending that the federal government establish a National Encampments Response plan. The plan must drive urgent change that responds to the Calls to Action developed in this report and addressed to all governments in Canada. The Calls to Action have been developed as the result of extensive consultation with encampment residents, community organizations, and municipalities across the country. They are listed here: <https://www.housingchrc.ca/en/publications/upholding-dignity-and-human-rights-federal-housing-advocates-review-homeless>

We are also calling on the Region to do the same. We need a codified encampment protocol that puts lived experts at the centre of its creation and has specific timelines and actionable results. Encampments are not a safe or sustainable solution for housing. But there are key recommendations community has been making for years to this Council:

Act immediately to save lives.

- **Ensure that everyone living in encampments has access to the basic necessities they need to survive and live in dignity, and to services to protect their physical and mental health.**
- **This includes access to clean water, sanitation, food, heating and cooling, accessibility supports, healthcare, and harm reduction.**
- **Ensure drop in-shelters are accessible 24/7 throughout the year to provide people with a dignified place to rest, take refuge from the elements and access services.**

End forced evictions of encampments.

- Forced encampment evictions make people more unsafe and expose them to a greater risk of harm and violence. Evictions destabilize people, remove them from their support systems, and cause them to lose the tools and equipment they need to survive.
- Put in place alternatives to removal of encampments that are designed following meaningful engagement with encampment residents to find solutions that meet their needs.
- All governments must ensure that laws, regulations and bylaws do not further destabilize encampments nor expose residents to greater risk of harm and violence.
- **The role of police and by-law officers and security officers should be de-emphasized in responses to encampments and shelter security. Police, by-law enforcement, and emergency service need clear direction to halt the confiscation of belongings, surveillance and harassment, which violate the human rights of encampment**

residents. All enforcement measures undertaken must be compliant with human rights standards.

Respect the inherent rights of Indigenous Peoples.

- First Nations, Inuit and Métis governments and representative organizations must be fully supported to develop and provide self-determined, culturally appropriate housing and related services and supports, including supports in urban centers.

Respect and uphold human rights.

- In the absence of adequate, affordable and accessible housing alternatives, all governments must recognize that people have a right to live in encampments.
- **People living in encampments must play a leading role in decision-making processes that affect them. All governments must implement ongoing and meaningful engagement with people living in encampments and those who support them.**
- All governments and political leaders at all levels have obligations to promote and protect the human rights and dignity of people experiencing homelessness. Leaders must refrain from actions and language that further stigmatizes the residents of encampments, or people experiencing homelessness, and exposes them to greater risk of rights violations.
- **All governments must publicly commit to applying a human rights-based approach to encampments that recognizes and addresses the distinct needs of First Nations, Inuit and Métis individuals, Black and other racialized individuals, women, 2SLGBTQI+ individuals, people fleeing gender-based violence, youth, seniors and people with disabilities. These approaches must align with Canada's human rights obligations as affirmed in international human rights instruments, the Charter and domestic law.**

Offer people permanent housing options as rapidly as possible.

Immediately develop and fund adequate housing solutions and supports so that people living in encampments can be re-housed as rapidly as possible. Such as **Housing First programs according to Fidelity: <https://housingfirsttoolkit.ca/>**

These housing solutions must meet the definition of adequate housing which includes security of tenure, affordability, accessibility, suitable location, availability of services, habitability and cultural adequacy.

In the absence of available adequate housing, all governments and service providers must work to address the structural barriers that result in existing emergency shelters not being accessible or appropriate for all people who might choose to use them. **Here for Low Barrier Housing Focused Shelter: <https://transformshelter.ca/wp-content/uploads/Housing-Focused-Shelter-Manual.pdf>**

Address the root causes of encampments.

Encampments are the symptom of systemic failures – all governments must urgently prioritize investments in adequate housing and support services to prevent and address homelessness. All governments must work together to address the systems that drive homelessness, including

systemic racism and discrimination and failings in the Canadian child welfare, corrections, and healthcare systems.

All governments must ensure that they are monitoring the progressive realization of the right to adequate housing and put in place measurement systems that include accurate, comprehensive, and replicable data on homelessness.

For people living in these encampments, every day is a matter of life and death.

We have learned that Peel's shelter and overflow systems are totalling above 300 per cent occupancy every week of the year and the number of individuals and families in overflow hotels exceeded historical norms, reaching well over 500 households,

We also know that Peel's shelter system is serving a growing number of asylum claimants experiencing homelessness and over 1,200 asylum claimant households are residing in Peel shelters and overflow hotels, representing 62 per cent of all households residing in shelters,

And Delphina Ngigi, 46 years old, a asylum seeker from Kenya, died only after arriving in Canada for 5 days, and according to the Rwandan Canadian Healing Centre, Dalphina Ngigi arrived at the Mississauga shelter at 1767 Dundas Street E. at about 1 p.m. on Feb. 17 and was outside in the freezing cold for hours, before she was let into the lobby at about 8 p.m.

We also now know that Delphina Ngigi spent the night in the Dundas Shelter lobby and collapsed when she was taking a shower in the shelter the next day, February 18th and then taken to hospital shortly afterwards and died there just after 4:30 p.m. Delphina Ngigi is the second asylum seeker to have died in a roughly three-month span outside of the same shelter.

What I have learned from the community is that Delphina Ngigi was a mother to four children, all of whom are still in Kenya and now orphaned, and the family with community support, hopes to raise \$40,000 to bring her back home and lay her to rest in Kenya.

Therefore, I am asking that Regional Council direct staff to fund the \$40,00.00 needed to support the return of Delphina Ngigi's bodily remains back to her remaining family in Kenya with the support of the Rwandan Canadian Healing Centre, Pastor Eddie Jjumba, Senior Pastor at Milliken Wesleyan Methodist Church in Markham, and Ngigi's sister, Faith Wairimu who is currently in Florida.

With respect, I ask of you to do the right thing and ensure that the deaths of any people living rough, in encampment communities and shelters NEVER happen again.

Michelle Bilek
Community members
Founding member of Peel Alliance to End Homelessness
Member of Peel Poverty Action Group
Principal Consultant, Real people Collaboration