

## Motion

**Agenda Number:** 20.2  
**Date:** March 21, 2024

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**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 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, many encampment locations are in close proximity to watersheds or creeks, which is a public safety concern, for example flooding within the Etobicoke Creek valley is a natural occurring process with the degree of flooding increasing as the severity of a storm event increases and during a 2-year storm event, flows within Etobicoke Creek are expected to begin spilling into the over bank areas adjacent to the channel, between Church Street and Williams Parkway;

And whereas, significant flooding events increase in severity, flood depths and velocities also increase to depths and velocities which would pose a significant risk to public safety;

And whereas TRCA operates a Flood Forecasting and Warning Program which monitors weather forecasts and watershed conditions and issues flood messages to warn of high flood risks and as certain types of storms such as thunderstorms can be difficult to predict, and as the response of river flows to storm events can be sudden, the TRCA advises against allowing people to live in and/or congregate within the floodplain of Etobicoke Creek.

And whereas, in October 2023, direction was given to Regional staff to work with Brampton, Mississauga and 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 funding through the federal government's Reaching Home: Canada's homelessness strategy will decrease from \$15.6 million in 2023 to \$2.4 million in 2026

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 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 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
4. That the Region of Peel advocate to the Federal government to sustain current levels of funding available through Reaching Home: Canada's homelessness strategy; and
5. That the Region of Peel's Outreach team uphold interim and future encampment policy and protocols alongside local park by-laws and advice from Conservation Authorities to immediately prioritize transition to available shelter and the safety for surrounding residents (housed and unhoused), businesses, cleanliness in local parks, significant flood risks and work with the local the municipality and Peel Police to prevent illegal activity or substance abuse in local parks; and
6. That the Regional staff report back to Regional Council on barriers identified by shelter users in accessing Peel's emergency shelter system and potential solutions with associated costs; and
7. That this motion and letter be forwarded to FCM and local MPs.