

Fellow members of Council,

During the previous term of Council, London became the first municipality anywhere in Canada to make the safety of women and girls a clear and focused commitment as part of our Strategic Plan. Earlier this year, Council renewed that pledge as part of our latest four-year plan.

I am seeking your support to show continued leadership in this space by formally recognizing Intimate Partner Violence and Femicide as an epidemic.

Last summer in Pembroke, Ont., a nearly month-long inquest examined the 2015 murders of three women in and around Renfrew County and issued 86 recommendations on Intimate Partner Violence. The first recommendation stemming from that inquest was for the Province of Ontario to declare Intimate Partner Violence an epidemic. The inquest also called on the Government of Canada to explore adding the term “Femicide” and its definition to the Criminal Code to be used where appropriate in the context of relevant crimes.

The reasons to do so are many:

- every six days in Canada a woman is killed by her intimate partner.
- on any given night in Canada, over 6,000 women and children sleep in shelters because it is not safe for them at home.
- this past year in Ontario, 52 women or one every week, were victims of femicide.
- in 2022 there were 6,537 Intimate Partner Violence calls made to the London Police Service, and 1,558 occurrences where one or criminal charges were laid.
- the London Abused Women’s Centre provided a total of 11,717 service interactions in 2022, including over 6,000 individual counselling, group, and urgent support service interactions, and more than 5,700 phone calls for service.
- Anova was forced to turn women away from its shelter 2,166 times in 2022 due to a lack of beds.
- 93% of the CAS domestic violence-related intake cases involve a girl/woman as the primary participant.

In addition, it is well understood and conclusively established that violence against women costs the national justice system, health care systems, social service agencies, and municipalities billions of dollars per year. We also know that municipalities are on the front lines in addressing gender-based violence.

It is my strong belief that the proposed resolution will raise awareness about the issue, and help us take further action to combat Intimate Partner Violence and Femicide.

As such, I am asking for your support on the following motion:

THAT London City Council:

- RECOGNIZES the issues of violence against women and girls in London as serious to the health and wellness of local families; and
- is COMMITTED to engaging with community partners to educate and support our residents about the seriousness and long-term danger of violence in our community; and
- THAT London City Council declares that Intimate Partner Violence and Femicide is an epidemic; and
- THAT the Province of Ontario be requested to declare, in accordance with Recommendation #1 of the Renfrew Inquest, that Intimate Partner Violence is an epidemic; and
- THAT the Government of Canada be requested, in accordance with Recommendation #79 of the Renfrew Inquest, to explore adding the term “Femicide” and its definition to the Criminal Code to be used where appropriate in the context of relevant crimes; and
- BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT this resolution be circulated to The Right Honourable Justin Trudeau, Prime Minister of Canada, The Honourable David Lametti, Minister of Justice and Attorney General of Canada, The Honourable Marci Ien, Minister for Women and Gender Equality and Youth of Canada, The Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, The Honourable Charmaine A. Williams, Associate Minister of Women’s Social and Economic Opportunity, The Honourable Parm Gill, Minister of Red Tape Reduction, the London Police Services Board, Association of Municipalities of Ontario, the Federation of Canadian Municipalities, and the Ontario Big City Mayors caucus.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'J. Morgan', with a long horizontal flourish extending to the right.

Josh Morgan, London Mayor