

October 3, 2023

For inclusion on the October 4 London City Council Meeting Agenda

Dear London City Councillors:

I am writing in strong support of the hubs throughout London that will provide essential needs, including beds, for members of the unhoused community. I especially appreciate the plan to prioritize women and female-identifying people, Indigenous people, people with complex medical needs, and youth. I am so glad that council accepted proposals from Atlohsa Family Healing Services, Youth Opportunities Unlimited and the Canadian Mental Health Association. There has been a great deal of research and community and expert input into what we, as a community, need, and the evidence clearly indicates that we need hubs in various strategic places across the city. I find that the calls to “protect the kids” and to keep them “safe” so disheartening because they draw a line between which kids and families deserve comfort and safety and those who do not, and these lines are based on assumptions and a willful misunderstanding. These hubs can be a path toward permanent housing, toward healing and recovery from the trauma associated with being unhoused, toward getting the essential basic health and safety needs, and toward employment. These hubs take a holistic and humane approach to the problem of homelessness. I just can’t understand why someone wouldn’t want to see these kinds of opportunities for London residents in their neighbourhood. We know that the roots of homelessness are systemic and political. The cost of housing has become impossible for many people, and access to all forms of health care is becoming increasingly fraught. I would like to see a London that will do whatever we can to improve the conditions of living for as many unhoused people as possible, starting as soon as possible. Rather than giving into fear and claims based on misconceptions, I urge City Councillors to make their decisions based on the needs of London. And that is to begin the staged plan to introduce hubs in the locations already selected, with the expansion of hubs to other areas over time.

Sincerely,

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