



October 3, 2023

London City Council
300 Dufferin Avenue
London, ON N6B 1Z2

**RE: Item 8.1.3., (4.2) Health and Homelessness Whole of Community System Response RFP
2023-199 Hubs Implementation Plan Results (Relates to Bill No. 367)**

For circulation and addition to the agenda for the Special Meeting London City Council
Thursday, October 5, 2023 at 1pm

Dear Councillors,

On behalf of Pillar Nonprofit Network, I am writing to encourage you – each of you – to vote in favour of awarding the Request for Proposal 2023-199 to Atlohsa Family Healing Services Inc., Youth Opportunities Unlimited, and CMHA Thames Valley Addiction and Mental Health Services, according to their individual proposals.

Though some of us might wish for more relief or faster relief, and some of us may be unnerved by trying something new, we see a once-in-forever opportunity to implement a coordinated system that can deliver good outcomes for unhoused Londonders and the whole of the community.

What good outcomes for the community? For those who fear a rise in unsafe or criminal activity in their neighbourhoods, we would remind our neighbours of two things.

- First, unhoused people are the least safe among us, the most likely to be victimized by crime, and as deserving of safety as everyone else.
- And second, these hubs support the highest acuity cases among unhoused Londoners. That's specialized language. What it means for them is that they're suffering and they desperately need our help to return to the community. For everyone else, it means we are attending to the people who make the most use of paramedic services, fire services, police services, and emergency health care. And without even transitional homes and services in which to stabilize, they make the greatest demands on shelter workers, social workers,

community connectors, and system navigators across all of London's social agencies. Giving these individuals a place to stabilize and make their journey to permanent housing makes them safer, frees up resources for other Londoners, and makes the City safer for everyone.

For those who wonder whether your investment could do more, we would ask, Do you want to **seem** to be doing something, or do you want positive outcomes? Are you willing to make an investment that meets the scale of our challenge? Since nothing we've done to date has even reduced homelessness, let alone eliminated it, should we really be doing the same old things?

- As [we've written elsewhere](#), we've failed time and time again to get the outcomes we seek in part because we have always started with a level of investment we wish to make and then sprinkled that money piecemeal across organizations. Each of them does their best with the resources available, but none of them can rise alone to the challenge of widespread and growing homelessness. The level of collaboration in this whole of community system response is an appreciable accomplishment. But, in the mix of information, misinformation, and disinformation, it can be difficult to identify the **genuine innovation** in this coordinated system. This time, we really listened to people with lived and living experience and the front-line workers who serve them every day, and then we designed a system that supports them toward the outcomes we **all** desire. Only then did we seek the necessary funding, knowing that we are offering supporters a really solid bet. We recommend investing in this scalable and replicable model to test this system.

Councillors, it's been 25 years since a group of big city mayors in Canada declared homelessness an 'unnatural disaster' in 1998, and you voted unanimously this year that housing and homelessness amounted to an "untenable emergency." Londoners can be proud to implement a new way out of this crisis if you are willing to bet on the knowledge and caring of our community today.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Maureen Cassidy', written in a cursive style.

Maureen Cassidy (she/her)

CEO, Pillar Nonprofit Network

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