

**From:** Mel Sheehan

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**Subject: Support of Implementation and Endorsement of Poverty Panel Recommendations**

Hi there,

My name is Melissa Sheehan, and I am writing to you in support of those who make up the Mayor's Poverty Panel in their efforts to have City Council approve and endorse their report. I and many other Londoners were very involved with the gathering of information in order to bring the recommendations together that you can see in the report, "London For All: A Roadmap to End Poverty", and am writing you to urge you to endorse the report as a whole, not just certain parts of it.

As someone with lived experience in poverty and homelessness in London for over 12 years, I am very impressed with the recommendations contained in the report. So much so that I cannot possibly pick which ones I like more than the others. These recommendations have been developed after consultations with the public, and Londoners have obviously contributed in a large part to these recommendations. Which should send a message to City Council that not only are Londoners aware of the problems and issues as it pertains to poverty and homelessness, but that they are ready for change, and for someone to do something about it. And if that has to be a group of people other than Council to do it, so be it.

I ask you to not pick apart the report and only endorse/implement some of the recommendations, but instead endorse and implement the report and recommendations in their entirety. A comprehensive report like this and the recommendations contained therein cannot just be implemented or endorsed individually. You cannot possibly fulfill one recommendation without fulfilling the rest of them.

I have been made aware that at least one councillor is unhappy with the idea of endorsing the entire report, or allowing a different body other than council to approach higher levels of government. The following are my comments on such:

Councillor Squire's idea and way of thinking to endorse and implement one recommendation (as it pertains to transit fare for children under 12 to ride for free) but not endorse and implement the entire report is counter-productive of the entire process. His inability to see the positive side of giving the Poverty Panel and implementation group the "go ahead" sort to speak to go to various levels of government is also deeply concerning. How can we evoke change if Councillor Squire (and possibly others) aren't willing to allow us to even try to change the way things are run, or allow us to even approach higher levels of government? Councillor Squire also assumes Londoners that have been part of this process haven't already been in contact with higher levels of government. What would be the big deal in allowing a body of us to actually approach higher levels of government? Is he concerned that it won't work or help? Or is he concerned that a body of people in the implementation group (which will be made up of people of lived experience and many of those who contributed to this report's formation of the recommendations) will actually get higher levels of government to notice what we are trying to accomplish, and perhaps actually help us and listen to us?

The whole point of the recommendations and implementation of said recommendations is to evoke change in London. And unfortunately, higher levels of government will have to be involved with the implementations at certain points. So what is the problem with allowing that process of getting higher levels of government involved? Is it because we aren't allowing you on Council to contact them for us? Because you guys have had over a year to do something about this, if not longer, and we have yet to see any REAL difference or effort on the part of council to reach out to higher levels of government to evoke change in London (or in Ontario for that matter) when it comes to changing, combating, or ending poverty or homelessness.

Let's not even go near the entire firestorm (pardon the pun) that started with the illegal group home fire on Oxford St. that killed a man. You people on Council were so up in arms at the beginning, and yet a year and a half later, nothing about the process has changed at all. So if that's what you guys do about that, how can we as Londoners expect you to do anything about the growing problem of poverty and homelessness in this city and province as a whole? You expect us to let you contact higher levels of government and deal with it at your leisure, rather than making a combative effort to evoke change on a constant basis?

We can see how much that's worked out for us to let you guys handle the problem, and now with this report and recommendations therein, it places the power and responsibility to evoke the changes we want to see back into the hands of everyday Londoners who see this problem and have no choice but to deal with the repercussions of it day in and day out. We want change, and this report and its recommendations put the power to be that change in OUR hands, which obviously has floored and slightly offended certain people on Council. Who better to evoke change and combat the problem than everyday Londoners who have spoken out and told the Poverty Panel that they want change, or those who have to live daily with the fallout of previous councils' responses and reactions to the problems of poverty and homelessness?

Along the lines of supporting the full endorsement and implementation of the report, I will say this: The recommendations in the report do all tie in to one another at several points in the implementation stages, and to go along with Councillor Squire's idea to leave most but one recommendations without endorsement and implementation will be detrimental to the goals set out in the report by the Poverty Panel, and will ultimately prove to Londoners that contributed to this report that they have wasted their time, or their opinions don't matter.

This report in its entirety containing the recommendations set out by the Poverty Panel is set out in such a way that all of the recommendations and the implementation depend on the entire report and all of the recommendations being endorsed, not just picked apart and only partially endorsed and implemented at the Council's discretion. Only endorsing and recommending the entire report is the only step in the right direction in order to combat the growing epidemic that is homelessness and poverty in London.

The recommendations and steps laid out in the report are realistic and attainable. The first step in getting the ball rolling on implementing all of the recommendations in the report depends on Council endorsing and approving the report and recommendations in its entirety, not just one or two that suit Council the best.

I plead and ask you to strongly consider endorsing the report in its entirety, and beginning the process of implementing all of the recommendations. It is possible, and a very realistic report on the solutions and responses that this city can do to combat and end poverty in one generation.

I can promise you that I, and many other Londoners who contributed to the formation of these recommendations will be urging you as time goes on and very watchful of the implementation process. I, for one, plan to be a very big part of the implementation process.

We as Londoners elected you to Council because we wanted a change. And the previous council would not have endorsed or approved this report in its entirety. It probably would have done what Councillor Squire is leaning towards urging the Council to do: Only endorse and implement one recommendation.

London is ready for these recommendations, and we are ready to evoke the changes needed to not only combat and end poverty in this city, but provincially and federally at the same time. And implementing these recommendations will assist us in accomplishing that goal. Please,

again strongly consider endorsing, supporting and implementing all of the recommendations in the report, not just ones that fit your personal beliefs.

Thank you for your time and attention to this matter.

Sincerely,

**Melissa Sheehan**

**Social Advocate and Person of Lived Experience, Homelessness and Poverty**

**Voice to the Voiceless, & Outspoken Supporter of People who are Homeless or Impoverished**  
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