

MEMORANDUM

To: Regional Chair Emmerson and Members of Regional Council

From: Katherine Chislett
Commissioner of Community and Health Services

Date: March 15, 2023

Re: Association of Municipalities Ontario's Resolution on Homelessness

The Association of Municipalities Ontario (AMO) has developed an advocacy strategy calling on the Provincial government to take immediate action on ending homelessness. As part of that strategy, AMO is encouraging municipalities pass a council resolution calling for greater Provincial action on homelessness, in advance of the 2023 Provincial Budget. AMO has provided all municipalities with a draft council resolution, which staff have amended to align with York Region's homelessness prevention priorities, attached as Appendix 1.

This memorandum provides further information on AMO's strategy and on the draft resolution.

AMO is actively involved in housing and homelessness advocacy

AMO supports the relationship between Ontario's 444 municipal governments and the Provincial government, providing an opportunity for municipal input and response to Provincial policy. AMO is implementing a broad advocacy strategy to request the Ontario government focus more resources towards ending homelessness, particularly through the next Provincial Budget. Its strategy calls on the Provincial government to:

- Acknowledge homelessness in Ontario as a social, economic and health crisis
- Commit to using a whole of government approach to end homelessness
- Work with AMO, municipalities, Indigenous peoples and non-governmental partners to develop, resource and implement an action plan

AMO has presented its Pre-Budget Submission to the Ontario Government's Standing Committee on Finance and Economic Affairs

AMO's [Pre-Budget Submission](#) centered on housing and homelessness and recommends the province take immediate action to increase support for homelessness, mental health and addictions solutions, including:

- Increasing Provincial social assistance rates and transforming the social assistance system
- Increasing the supply of deeply affordable housing by supporting a broad range of approaches – acquisitions, conversions, renovations, rent subsidies
- Investing in community-based mental health and addictions services including supportive housing
- Increasing base funding for the Provincial Homelessness Prevention Program to enable municipalities to respond effectively to ongoing urgent needs deepened by the COVID-19 pandemic while governments work to address the root causes of homelessness

AMO is encouraging municipalities to consider passing a council resolution calling for greater provincial government action on housing and homelessness

AMO drafted a homelessness resolution that municipalities across Ontario can adopt in advance of or close to the Provincial Budget. The resolution calls for the Ontario Government to commit to ending homelessness and work with a diverse group of community and municipal partners to develop and implement an action plan. The Ontario budget is to be released on March 23, 2023.

Other municipalities across Ontario are passing motions calling on the Ontario Government to end homelessness in Ontario. As of March 14, 2023, fourteen municipalities and District Social Services Administration Boards have passed AMO's motion, or similar motions: Peel Region, Grey County, City of North Bay, The District of Sault Ste. Marie Social Services Administration Board, Cochrane District Social Services Administration Board, District of Thunder Bay Social Services Administration Board, Niagara Region, City of Timmins, Town of Parry Sound, Bruce County, Town of Newmarket, City of Owen Sound, City of Belleville, and the City of Waterloo. Additional municipalities have signaled their intentions to bring forth similar resolutions in advance of the Provincial Budget.

Federal and Provincial governments have not provided the level of funding required to address the significant community need

York Region's emergency and transitional housing continues to operate at or above capacity. During York Region's 2021 Point-in-Time Count, 329 people were counted as experiencing homelessness of which 102 people were considered to be experiencing chronic homelessness (people who have been homeless for six months or more in the past year).

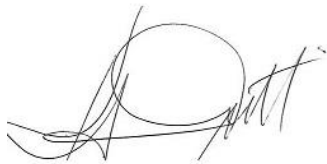
The Provincial Social Services Relief Fund provided approximately \$48 million to fund critical programs throughout the COVID-19 pandemic, greatly benefited people experiencing homelessness in York Region. This funding ended on December 31, 2022.

As of April 1, 2022, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing consolidated three programs (Community Homelessness Prevention Initiative, Home For Good and the Strong Communities Rent Supplement Program) into the Homelessness Prevention Program with total funding of \$20,871,400 provided for the 2022/2023 fiscal year. The Province provided an increase of just under \$1.8 million over the total funding provided for the three programs the previous year. On February 3, 2023, the Ministry provided a planning allocation for Homelessness Prevention

Program for the 2023/2024 fiscal year equal to the previous fiscal year funding amount. While the Ministry has confirmed funding will not decrease in 2023/2024, the actual funding amount has still to be confirmed. Planning allocations for future years have not been provided at this time.

York Region has a historical deficit of community housing to support residents living with low income. Prior to transferring housing responsibility to municipalities, Federal and Provincial governments significantly invested in new supply, building almost 440 new units in York Region each year from the mid-1980s to mid-1990s. Since becoming responsible for housing in 2000, the Region has made substantial investments in community housing, increasing supply by nearly 1,500 units. Although Federal and Provincial governments have introduced programs to help sustain and grow the system, these programs do not provide the level of funding required to address the significant community need. Programs are short-term and time-limited, which impacts the Region's ability to plan strategically over the long-term. In [June 2022](#), Council asked senior levels of government to each provide a third of the funding needed to double the rate of growth for community housing in the Region.

On February 23, 2023, York Region Council approved [\\$12.8 million](#), as part of its 2023 budget, to address critical issues impacting residents related to housing, homelessness, community investments and mental health. Increased Provincial support will help York Region respond quickly and effectively to the homelessness challenge.



Katherine Chislett
Commissioner of Community and Health Services



Bruce Macgregor
Chief Administrative Officer

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Appendix 1 – AMO Resolution on Homelessness

AMO Resolution on Homelessness

Homelessness Resolution

A Call to the Provincial government to End Homelessness in Ontario

To Premier Doug Ford:

Please be advised that the Regional Municipality of York at its meeting held [Date] adopted the following:

WHEREAS the homelessness crisis is taking a devastating toll on families and communities, undermining a healthy and prosperous Ontario;

WHEREAS in York Region's 2021 Point-in-Time Count, 329 people were counted as experiencing homelessness of which approximately 102 people were experiencing homelessness for six months or more;

WHEREAS York Region's emergency and transitional housing and seasonal shelters are consistently operating at, or near, full capacity;

WHEREAS York Region's homelessness prevention programs continue to see increasing demand from people, including families at-risk of homelessness;

WHEREAS the homelessness crisis is the result of historic underinvestment by the Provincial and Federal governments;

WHEREAS the Province's Social Services Relief Fund which provided funding for significant homelessness supports ended December 31, 2022;

WHEREAS – the planning allocation for Homelessness Prevention Program funding from the Province shows no increase for the 2023/2024 fiscal year;

WHEREAS the Regional Municipality of York has been the primary funder of new community housing supply;

WHEREAS homelessness requires a range of housing, and integrated social service and health solutions;

WHEREAS homelessness is felt most at the level of local government and the residents that they serve;

WHEREAS the Regional Municipality of York continues to invest in its homelessness prevention response and construction of new community housing, and requires additional ongoing

investments in social assistance, the provincial Homelessness Prevention Program, and capital funding to address this complex challenge; and,

WHEREAS leadership and urgent action is needed from the provincial government on an emergency basis to develop, resource, and implement a comprehensive plan to prevent, reduce and ultimately end homelessness in Ontario.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED THAT the Regional Municipality of York calls on the Provincial Government to urgently:

- a. Acknowledge that homelessness in Ontario is a social, economic, and health crisis;
- b. Commit to ending homelessness in Ontario;
- c. Work with AMO and a broad range of community, health, Indigenous and economic partners to develop, resource, and implement an integrated action plan to achieve this goal.

AND FURTHER THAT a copy of this motion be sent to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing; the Minister of Children, Community and Social Services; the Minister of Health; Minister of Long-Term Care; Minister of Education and to the Association of Municipalities of Ontario.