



**Council Member Motion  
Committee of the Whole Meeting of October 6th, 2022**

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**Date: October 3rd, 2022**

**From: Councillor Potts and Councillor Alto**

**Subject: Community Wellness Task Force Recommendations**

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**Late Item Rationale:**

It is recommended that the council member motion: Community Wellness Task Force Recommendations (submitted at 11:15am October 3rd) be considered at the October 6th Committee of the Whole as it is the last meeting of this term and the last opportunity to bring forward the remaining work of this Strategic Plan item.

**BACKGROUND**

The Community Wellness Task Force (CWTF) was established through the City of Victoria's 2019-2022 Strategic Plan. The task force brought people with lived and living experience of mental health challenges, substance use, and homelessness together to develop recommendations that could generate greater opportunities for community wellness.

The CWTF developed recommendations over 2019-2020 and in June of 2020 their recommendation, of a civilian led response for community crisis, was brought forward to council. This recommendation has advanced to a Provincially funded pilot for the City of Victoria.

A number of the remaining recommendations have been addressed by council member motions, the work of staff, Provincial action, or work of community serving organizations. Where there is more work to do, it is recommended to be considered in the future work plans of the Homelessness Advisor, Social Planner, and Equity and Inclusion office.

It is also recommended that the exceptional work of the Community Wellness Task Force members be recognized.

**RECOMMENDATION**

1. That the City of Victoria thank the members of the Community Wellness Task Force for their work and significant contribution to community wellness in the City of Victoria.
2. That the remaining recommendations are received by council and considered in future work plans of the Homelessness Advisor, Social Planner, and Equity and Inclusion office.

**Respectfully submitted,**



Councillor Potts



Councillor Alto

**Attachments:** 1. Community Wellness Task Force Recommendations (2019-2022)

# **Community Wellness Task Force Recommendations (2019-2022)**

## **Bylaw and Policy Review**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Underway:

- That Council direct staff to reduce harms associated with enforcing the 7-7 bylaw.
- That Council direct staff to develop and distribute a clear policy on the removal and reunification of people's belongings ensuring that the impoundment of belongings is only used as a last resort and return of belongings is timely and the reunification policy is sensitive to the needs of persons experiencing homelessness.

More to be done:

- That the City of Victoria conducts a thorough review of bylaws to identify any bylaws that might be discriminatory.

## **Education and Breaking Down Stigma**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Underway:

- That the City of Victoria work with partners to host regular, ongoing anti-stigma events and actions.

More to be done:

- Non Stigmatizing language in all council member motions and staff reports.
- That the City of Victoria commits to anti-stigma training programs for staff, councillors, and community members.
- That Council direct staff to include anti-stigma training as a requirement to receive a business license from the City of Victoria.

## **Housing Rights and Sheltering with Dignity**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

Underway:

- That the City of Victoria advocate to the Province for vacancy control to tie rent increases to the unit rather than the tenant.
- That the City of Victoria enshrine the "Right to Housing" in the OCP and all relevant policy documents.
- That the City of Victoria explores the authority of "right of first refusal" to purchase housing as has been instituted in Montreal.
- That the City of Victoria work with upper levels of government to ensure everyone has access to safe and secure sheltering options while housing for all is constructed.

More to be done:

- Advocate that the National Housing Occupancy Standards be reviewed with a cultural intergenerational living lens.
- Advocate that the Province to prioritize keeping families together and allocate funding that would otherwise be allocated to foster parent(s) to parent(s)/guardians and efforts to keep families together.

## **Health Care and Health Access**

## **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

### Underway:

- That the City of Victoria advocate to the Province to ensure no one is discharged from the hospital on to the street.
- That the City of Victoria advocate to the Province for the rapid expansion of detox, stabilisation, and recovery beds.
- That the City of Victoria advocate for expanding the practice of physicians prescribing 'emergency safe supply' measures like take-home hydromorphone tablets to patients who are currently relying on the illicit market.
- That the City of Victoria to advocate for a safer supply.
- Advocate for the rapid expansion of training for primary care physicians across BC in relation to substance use and mental health.

### More to be done:

- That the City of Victoria advocate to the Province for an expansion of wrap-around interventions in supportive housing programs and investigate expanding the allocation of housing reserve funds to these operational aspects of supportive housing projects.
- That the City of Victoria advocate to the Province that mental health care/counselling services are covered by the healthcare system.

## **Peer Hubs and Peer support**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

### Underway:

- That the City of Victoria supports the coordination of peer support efforts across the ecosystem of support service providers.
- That the City of Victoria prioritize grants to organizations who employ peer support workers for harm reduction, outreach, and mental health work.
- That the City of Victoria continue to support the participation of peers in advisory committees through accommodations and appropriate honoraria.

### More to be done:

- That the City of Victoria advocates that the Province provide funding to pay peer support workers and provide the necessary funding to organizations to build the organizational capacity to support peer support workers.
- Convene dialogue with city-owned community centres to negotiate free meeting space for peer connection hubs.

## **Alternative Response**

### **RECOMMENDATIONS:**

### Underway:

- Council direct staff to develop the framework for an accessible, culturally safe, and appropriate alternative response model in time for consideration as part of the 2021 budget deliberations, and that this process include research to review and consider other municipalities' approaches to alternative response models including the CAHOOTS model.
- That Council appoints one or more council liaisons to attend the community partner meetings and engagement sessions that are held in the development of the alternative response model.
- Council endorse the three overarching statements of the Community Wellness Task Force.
- That the engagement of community partners includes strong representation by communities (individuals and organizations) who are disproportionately harmed within the current system namely black, indigenous, POC communities, persons with lived and living experience (PWLLE) of homelessness, mental health challenges, or substance use.

- That funding for this initial project development work be drawn from the remaining research budget in the Community Wellness Task Force Budget and the 2020 contingency if needed.