



Council Member Motion
For the Committee of the Whole Meeting of July 25, 2024

To: Committee of the Whole **Date:** July 19, 2024
From: Councillor Krista Loughton
Subject: Urgent Action Required to Support Unsheltered Victorians

BACKGROUND

Managing unsheltered homelessness is a top priority in Victoria. The humanitarian crisis on our streets requires urgent action – ending unsheltered homelessness in our city cannot wait any longer.

B.C. Housing's website states the following:

"People experiencing homelessness are living in unsafe conditions in encampments throughout multiple communities in British Columbia.

To address these challenges, BC Housing is working with partners to provide people living outdoors and in encampments with better access to a range of support services, new shelters, and housing options through new programs funded by the Province under the [Belonging in BC Homelessness Plan](#): Homeless Encampment Action Response Team (HEART) and the Homeless Encampment Action Response Temporary Housing (HEARTH)."

On February 24, 2024, the City of Victoria and the Ministry of Housing signed a [Memorandum of Understanding](#) (MOU) to help both parties coordinate [HEART and HEARTH](#) collaboratively.

The MOU states that its purpose is the following:


"This MOU has been developed to recognize the parties' shared purpose of supporting people in encampments and the unsheltered through commitment to implement HEART and HEARTH, a coordinated approach to resolution of encampments that prevents entrenchment, improves health and safety, preserves dignity for homeless encampment residents, respects the need for culturally appropriate services for Indigenous peoples, and considers the needs of the surrounding community."

Once HEART and HEARTH are more fully operational, they can provide various paths out of unsheltered homelessness for Victoria. This partnership with the Province is an excellent opportunity for significantly reducing the number of unsheltered Victorians, but until all pieces are functionally up and running, shelter availability continues to be an immediate, critical issue.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Council directs staff to report back at the next Committee of the Whole meeting on August 1, 2024, with an update on the status of efforts to support unsheltered persons and people in encampments through the HEART program, the number of people experiencing unsheltered homelessness in Victoria, and the projected number of shelter spaces, transitional housing, supportive housing, and shelter rate units coming online through HEARTH programs.
2. That this motion be forwarded to the July 25, 2024 daytime meeting of Council for consideration.

Respectfully submitted


Councillor ~~Krista~~ Loughton