

Attention: Honorable Minister of Social Development  
Honorable Bruce Fitch  
Sartain MacDonald Building  
P. O. Box 6000  
Fredericton, NB  
E3B 5H1

March 1<sup>st</sup>, 2022

Dear Honorable Bruce Fitch,

The City of Saint John is requesting the continued intervention of the Government of New Brunswick to respond to the alarming situation faced by those who are homeless in Saint John, especially with the closure of the temporary shelter at the Saint John Stone Anglican Church on February 28<sup>th</sup>, 2022. Unfortunately, there remains many in our community unable to access homeless shelters, and these individuals are at high-risk of experiencing severe consequences due to the lack of intervention.

Many individuals who are unable to access temporary shelters have been temporarily or permanently barred from Saint John shelters due to serious violations of shelter rules, including uttering threats, assault, stealing, among others. Shelters have reluctantly barred these individuals to maintain the safety of shelter workers and clients. These individuals are involved in a vicious and repetitive cycle of short interactions between shelters, health care and law enforcement professionals, where they are released to the public without basic shelter availability.

The Government of New Brunswick should consider what resources, programs and interventions are needed to immediately support these several homeless individuals, including alternative shelter supports, addictions and mental health supports. We would encourage the Government of New Brunswick to investigate new programs to support those homeless individuals who cannot safely engage in existing homeless shelters. This should include the identification of a suitable day-time warming centre.

The Government of New Brunswick must adequately fund the requirements of the existing local shelters, to ensure that shelters have sufficient funding to maintain critical services to Saint John's homeless population. The City of Saint John has recently received a request from a recognized local shelter for over \$400,000 of direct funding support to cover their transitional housing project. It is unacceptable that shelters find themselves in a situation where they are forced to request additional funding from municipal government. The Government of New Brunswick must fund these shelters to address their needs.

In addition, shelters in Saint John are having trouble recruiting and retaining much needed staff, who are faced with daily challenges within the shelter setting. Additional staff could enable these pre-existing shelters to offer more tailored services and offer additional beds. The Government of New Brunswick is urged to work with existing shelters in Saint John to support the ability to retain and recruit additional staff, which should include the consideration of wage subsidies, grants, tax relief, training, counselling, and on-site supports.

While the City would invite a broader discussion with the Government of New Brunswick on introducing long-term transformational reform in order to break the cycle of generational poverty and homelessness, the immediate needs for the several homeless individuals and strains on homeless shelters must be resolved immediately.

The City of Saint John is reliant on the innovation, resources, and expertise found within the Government of New Brunswick, in partnership with the community partners, to effectively resolve this critical need in our community.

Sincerely,

Her Worship Donna Noade Reardon  
Mayor, City of Saint John