

**BACKGROUND**

**COUNCILLOR GARES – NOTICE OF MOTION  
TO CONSIDER AN IMPACT ASSESSMENT ON EXISTING SUPPORTIVE HOUSING  
AND BARRIER FREE PROJECTS WITHIN THE DOWNTOWN CORE**

**RATIONALE:**

The City of Vernon remains committed to support our most vulnerable populations, including those struggling with homelessness, mental health challenges, and addiction. However, we must also acknowledge the legitimate concerns of residents and businesses who have patiently lived through the impacts of living and working in the proximity of new support facilities and critical wrap-around services. While these services are essential, their concentration within our city can bring unintended consequences such as increased public disorder, pressure on emergency services, and a decline in neighborhood livability and property values.

BC Housing, under provincial authority, can override municipal bylaws to create supportive housing projects and temporary shelters. This policy direction often places multiple services in close proximity, thereby compounding local challenges. Recognizing that social services and mental health issues are not exclusively municipal responsibilities, the City of Vernon has taken proactive steps purchasing public washrooms, boosting police, fire and bylaw funding for greater foot patrol presence. While reports suggest a reduction in public complaints, many community members still feel the strain.

This Council has worked hard to protect and uplift those experiencing mental health and addiction issues and will continue doing so. However, the purpose of this motion is also to bring relief and meaningful support to the residents and businesses that remain affected by the ongoing impacts of service clustering. By highlighting these complex social issues and strengthening our partnerships with Interior Health, BC Housing, and other provincial authorities, we can develop balanced, empathetic policies. The goal is to ensure our most vulnerable receive the help they need, while still maintaining safe, welcoming neighborhoods for everyone. Through collaboration, engagement, and thoughtful policy-making, we can uphold the collective well-being of all members of our community.