

**Subject Line: Letter for inclusion in Council Meeting Agenda**  
**RE: "Parks and Open Space Bylaw No. 7370"**

From: Shailen Quarengi, 4548 Law Avenue Redacted

Dear Mayor and Council,

I am writing in regards to Parks and Open Space Bylaw No. 7370, 2002, Amendment Bylaw No. 9389, 2023. My name is Shailen, I am a community social worker and I spend a great deal of time in the downtown neighborhood doing front line social work. As a new social work graduate we are taught to question and criticize power imbalances, oppression and colonialism. This new proposed by-law is all three of the previous things listed. This by-law is oppressive, it is colonial and it is a power over our most vulnerable population. We are entering seven years of a public health emergency regarding toxic drug poisoning and the solution proposed by this by-law is harmful. Instead of working with local organizations fighting this, you are choosing to further oppress vulnerable individuals by displacing them and paying police to police. This is NOT a solution to the issues we are experiencing downtown. We need to look to community organizations that are supporting unhoused and vulnerable individuals and support those who are actually doing the work as opposed to paying police to police individuals, which does nothing in the long run.

I would like to express my frustration with the City's stubborn commitment to the unsafe and unjust downtown dehousing centralization plan. As Federal Housing Advocate Marie-Josée Houle has pointed out, "the proposed plan will violate Indigenous rights and the human rights of people experiencing homelessness."

As such, it is extremely disappointing to see the city's renewed commitment to a strategy that will enact violence on our dehousing population rather than actually helping them survive as the housing situation across the province continues to deteriorate.

As any online comment section demonstrates, there are many people in this city who think of our dehousing as valueless and disposable. Those private citizens may offend me, but to see the full power of the Corporation of The City of Prince George continually leveraged in service of the most inhumane attitudes in the community is more than I can stand in silence.

The time has come to accept that living on the street is simply the only viable option for some people in the short term. There are many experts advocating for different approaches that would make the streets safe for everyone, including the people forced to shelter themselves in public spaces, and I hope you will pause this plan to collaborate with them on a new way forward.

Sincerely, Shailen Quarengi