Connor McDonell

Item 1, from IRPW June 9th report (Regent Avenue Bus Shelters): While I agree that the "No Fixed Address" population that has been using these shelters persistently for long durations of time is problematic for actual Transit system users looking to use them in compliance with the Public Transit & Transitway By-Law, the solution proposed in the motion by the EK-T Committee is horribly short-sighted. What will that population do when the shelters come down should EPC and Council at large concur with its recommendation? They will go across the street to occupy the unheated shelters of EB Regent/Stapon (40196) and EB Regent/Rougeau (40187) instead. It'll be back to square one where the issue is likely to persist for an additional 2 years, then what? Will we see another recommendation sometime in the future after a similar span of time to then remove the shelters at those two stops as well? Just several days ago as I'm writing this, while I was briefly stopping in at the Montana's restaurant directly adjacent to the former of the two stops, I witnessed a gentleman sleeping next to the unheated shelter. I simply can't imagine the rest of the population not following suit and occupying the shelters across the street, instead of seeking out a more permanent solution to their struggles to allow them to leave this current lifestyle of theirs behind. It is not and should not be in the City's best interest to spend its budget dollars engaged in a game of whack-a-mole that leads to a form of mutually assured destruction of the quality of life of Transit users by removing comfort features they've been accustomed to. Another issue area I've witnessed in recent weeks with a persistent struggle of persistent occupancy is southbound Harkness Station. It would be just as ludicrous in that scenario to suggest that we remove all of the redeeming qualities and features that make a station a station.

Though I would argue that the issue really isn't limited to Transit specifically as panhandling is a common occurrence at and around the Regent/Stapon intersection, and I have to question as a result whether passage through IRPW was really the appropriate outlet for implementing real action for the betterment of their lives as it pertains to the persons referenced in the motion. I am sure that this problem has been a source of mild discomfort not only for Transit users but also for the many businesses in the immediate surrounding area that have to incur additional costs to maintain their facilities and also protect the security of their staff and patrons alike as manic episodes are not unheard of; it is obvious that security measures in establishments like the nearby Walmart and Real Canadian Superstore are unique responses to the specific area what with certain types of products under lock and key that you would not find is the case at other locations in different areas of the city. Employees may for example be disincentivized to do as thorough of a job cleaning up bathrooms as one example, knowing that in not even a day or two their efforts will be for naught when drug abusers do not have the decency to clean up after themselves when getting their fix, posing a health hazard to others when nature inevitably calls and insanitary conditions persist on a regular basis.

It should also be mentioned that the be-it-resolved as currently written is ambiguous and open to misinterpretation as there are not 2 westbound stops "directly in front of Kildonan Place Mall" but in fact there are 3, those being WB Regent/Kildonan Place (40186), WB Regent/Stapon East (40189), and WB Regent/Stapon (40195), and all 3 of them have seating. Though any actual user of Transit services who has been witness to the situation over the past couple of years would be able to use common sense and infer that this motion is targeted at the 1st and 3rd of those stops specifically, it ought to be said that better care and attention should certainly be paid when drafting be-it-resolveds to ensure there is no room for error should there be a need to reference the scope of the motion at a later date. By comparison, Stapon East does not have a problem of persistent occupancy, and it has a bench as well

that could become a target for removal with the way the motion is worded currently by way of both having “seating” and being “directly in front of Kildonan Place Mall”.

Maybe the motion ought to be amended further such that a basic bench is preserved at the 1st and 3rd stops so that both are like Stapon East? This would at least preserve some quality-of-life for riders, at least in fair weather conditions. But that may result in the population then shifting over to the eastbound stops anyway as I mentioned earlier. In any case, scorched-earth is not the way to go.

Thanks for your consideration.