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March 5, 2019

Chair and Members,
Planning and Housing Committee,
City of Toronto,
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2

Re: Amendments to Zoning By-Law for the City of Toronto 569-2013 and Zoning By-Law 138-2003 (The Municipal Shelter By-Law)

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

On behalf of the Ralph Thornton Community Centre, I am writing in support of the proposed zoning by-law amendments removing the locational criteria currently in place.

There is a housing crisis in our city. Many people, through no fault of their own, are without housing period or without adequate housing. Some of these individuals have no choice but to use our shelters for safety and warmth. While the demand for our shelter system reflects the crisis of homelessness in Toronto and is therefore a condemnation of our society, it needs to be remembered that these individual are Torontonians just like the rest of us.

The Ralph Thornton Community Centre is of the view that those in need of shelter should be treated as equal citizens of our city and provided with the opportunity to shelter in any part of the city regardless of location. We think that, for too long, shelters have been regarded as 'blights on the community' and therefore fair game for restrictions 'protecting' citizens of Toronto from their presence.

We believe that individuals availing themselves of shelters are full citizens and are in need of both shelter and services in order to assist them to become housed and contributing members of our community. These amendments are, in our view, a small step but a beginning to proper treatment of those in need of our shelter system. We applaud the recommendation to remove the restrictions on the locations of shelter in our communities.

Yours truly,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Alan Lennon". The signature is written in a cursive style and is positioned above a faint, light-colored rectangular stamp.

Alan Lennon
President, Board of Management