

**From:** [David Walsh](#)  
**To:** [Economic and Community Development](#)  
**Subject:** [External Sender] My comments for 2023.EC7.7 on October 24, 2023 Economic and Community Development Committee  
**Date:** October 22, 2023 10:43:00 PM

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To the City Clerk:

Please add my comments to the agenda for the October 24, 2023 Economic and Community Development Committee meeting on item 2023.EC7.7, 2024 Shelter Infrastructure Plan and the Homelessness Services Capital Infrastructure Strategy (HSCIS)

I understand that my comments and the personal information in this email will form part of the public record and that my name will be listed as a correspondent on agendas and minutes of City Council or its committees. Also, I understand that agendas and minutes are posted online and my name may be indexed by search engines like Google.

## **Action Report - Capital Infrastructure Strategy (HSCIS)**

### **EC7.7 - 2024 Shelter Infrastructure Plan and the Homelessness Services Capital Infrastructure Strategy (HSCIS)**

**Comments: David Walsh – [david@dwalsh.ca](mailto:david@dwalsh.ca)**

#### **Capital Infrastructure Strategy (HSCIS) Oct 24<sup>th</sup> 2024 Shelter Infrastructure Plan and the Homelessness Services**

I am part of a network of faith organizations that is working to support the ‘Black’ churches that have been on the front lines in providing shelter and housing for refugees and asylum seekers. As of September 2023, refugee claimants represent approximately 40% of clients using Toronto’s emergency shelter system. Page 12

If we can support the goals of these churches, this action will reduce the large number of refugees and asylum seekers using the City’s shelter system

The City’s strategy report states “In December 2017, City Council approved the Toronto Action Plan to Confront Anti-Black Racism to help address the systemic barriers faced by Black people in Toronto and ensure more equitable policies, programs and services. Recommendation 10 of the Action Plan relates specially to improving shelter conditions to better support Black Torontonians, with an emphasis on creating safer physical spaces within shelters for queer and trans Black youth and Black women.” Page 20

#### **We need to look at community-based models.**

- In 2006 I worked with friends to create a non-profit that operates 3 houses on Broadview Ave next to Loblaws – it is for men in transition from addiction treatment; and our cost of operating these homes for 28 men has been about 30% of the amount

that the City is projecting for its shelter spaces.

- Governments need to regain a vision of working with community-based non-profits. When I participated in the 1989 Provincial task force on homelessness, there were over 800 non-profit housing organizations in Ontario

**The ability of the City to get projects completed is uncertain.**

- the new City Shelter at Dundas & Bloor – over 4 years and still not open
- the City Buildings on George Street – have been sitting empty for 10 years

**The Cost of Social Housing**

It is not easy to understand and accept the costing of social housing – the greater inequality of incomes has resulted in a huge need across the country.

There are huge costs because of the high subsidies needed for social housing.

There is a gap of about \$3,000 per month between what a person on OW can pay for rent and the economical cost of a housing unit. The Federal government has done these calculations and it is evident that they have decided to avoid funding social housing, except for small amounts.

One of the housing experts who has spoken clearly over many years about the social housing crisis and the actions needed to address it is David Hulchanski. The City should be consulting with him rather than undertaking further studies.

The City needs to preserve rental buildings by negotiating with the Province to stop the demolition of rental buildings.

An example is 25 St Mary Street – a 24 storey rental building with 254 units that is scheduled to be demolished to build luxury condos.

Last week I visited Hamilton and Kitchener to see their tiny home projects - these projects are playing a big part in moving individuals out of encampments; particularly those with mental health and addiction challenges.

**#8** of the City's Action Report asks City Council to request the Federal Government and the Province to urgently increase investments in the Canada-Ontario Housing Benefit (COHB) program to meet demand and continue to support newcomers as well as Torontonians in need of housing. The 'Black Churches' have landlords who are willing to rent housing units – this rent benefit is needed now.

We need to ask: “Why are governments giving huge subsidies to support the automotive sector and not to social housing”

The Federal and Provincial governments have been pouring billion of dollars into funding the automotive sector, based on the premise that the funds will create jobs.

Why are our governments not funding the social housing sector to the same extent when housing is such a big contributor to jobs and to improving the lives of many people? And the savings on social costs to our communities would be enormous - in terms of reducing the costs of crime, extra police work, the court system, hospitals, and ambulances, just to name a

few.

Housing creates skills and jobs, and should be a priority over cars. We need to work with the development sector to make a better case for housing.

The tragedy of homelessness - where (25%) reported staying in unsheltered settings – double the number from 2018. Pag 11

In October 1998 [Metro Council in a vote of 53-1](#) endorsed the Toronto Disaster Relief Committee's [State of Emergency Declaration](#) that homelessness was a national disaster. And on November 22 1998 the Big City Mayors Caucus of the Federation of Canadian Municipalities also endorsed the disaster declaration.

**It took 100 years to address the inequity of residential schools.**

**We have a moral duty to address homelessness now.**

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