

Ottawa

Suite 616, Confederation Building
229 Wellington Street
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0H9
Tel: +1 (613) 992-2352
Fax: +1 (613) 992-6301



Ottawa

Pièce 616, Édifice de la Confédération,
229, rue Wellington
Ottawa, (Ontario) K1A 0H9
Tél: +1 (613) 992-2352
Télé: +1 (613) 992-6301

Constituency

111 Peter Street
Suite 700
Toronto, Ontario M5J 2P1
Tel: +1 (416) 533-2710
Fax: +1 (416) 533-2236

Kevin Vuong, M.P., F.R.S.A.
Kevin Vuong, député

Member of Parliament / Député
Spadina—Fort York

Circonscription

111, rue Peter
le troisième étage
Toronto, (Ontario) M5J 2P1
Tél: +1 (416) 533-2710
Télé: +1 (416) 533-2236

Economic and Community Development Committee
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON Canada
M5H 2N2

October 23, 2023

Dear Economic and Community Development Committee:

**RE: Advocating for a respite centre dedicated to women fleeing abuse, families, or refugees
No to a low-barrier respite site beside schools**

I am writing to advocate for the implementation of **a respite centre dedicated to women and their children fleeing abuse, families, and refugees**. The Niagara and King West neighbourhood is a family-oriented community, where residents are calling for a respite model where they could provide further support as a neighbourhood of families for families.

The City of Toronto's current plan to convert 629 Adelaide St. W. into an 80-person 24-hour low-barrier walk-in respite site presents significant safety concerns, especially to children, and other vulnerable groups.

For your background information, the proposed site is:

- Only 65 metres from St. Mary Catholic Elementary School;
- Only 350 metres east of Niagara Street Junior Public School;
- Only 70 metres from a school bus drop-off;
- On the path that students from Niagara Street Junior Public School would take to access after-school programs at St. Mary Catholic Elementary School; and
- On a quiet residential cul-de-sac with limited lighting and deterrence.

The addition of this low-barrier respite centre would literally **sandwich St. Mary Catholic Elementary School with a "safe" injection site**, with any potential users crossing the school grounds to access the site from the proposed respite centre.

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Moreover, the safety concerns are not limited to just kids and youth, who are already facing limited access to surrounding parks and recreation as a result of the growing incidence of crime.

Residents with elderly parents, seniors, and families are also concerned with the city's poor track record at protecting local communities neighbouring other respite centres that include a central intake – unlike the one proposed at 629 Adelaide St. W., which will be low-barrier without any intake function.

As the temperature drops, everyone appreciates the need for a warm place for people to get out of the cold. The community wants to continue to do its part as they already host the below agencies:

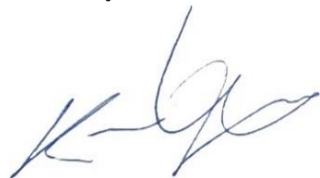
- Evangel Hall Mission on Adelaide at Bathurst;
- Salvation Army Florence Booth House on Queen at Tecumseth;
- West Neighbourhood House on Queen at Bathurst;
- St. Christopher House on Bathurst at Queen; and
- Homes First on Strachan at Wellington.

This is why the community is advocating for the city to implement an alternative model to the proposed low-barrier respite centre. Please do not turn a blind eye to the risk that a low-barrier respite centre will have on our community and the risk that it presents to our children.

On Wednesday, October 18th, 2023, I joined hundreds of concerned parents and residents who have been fighting for their voices to be heard. I hope you will listen to the people of this community to bring a family-friendly respite centre dedicated to women fleeing abuse with their children, families, and refugees.

Please act to protect our children, our families, and our community.

Sincerely,



Kevin Vuong, M.P., F.R.S.A.
Spadina—Fort York



FIGURE 1: Bird's Eye View of Agencies Already in Community

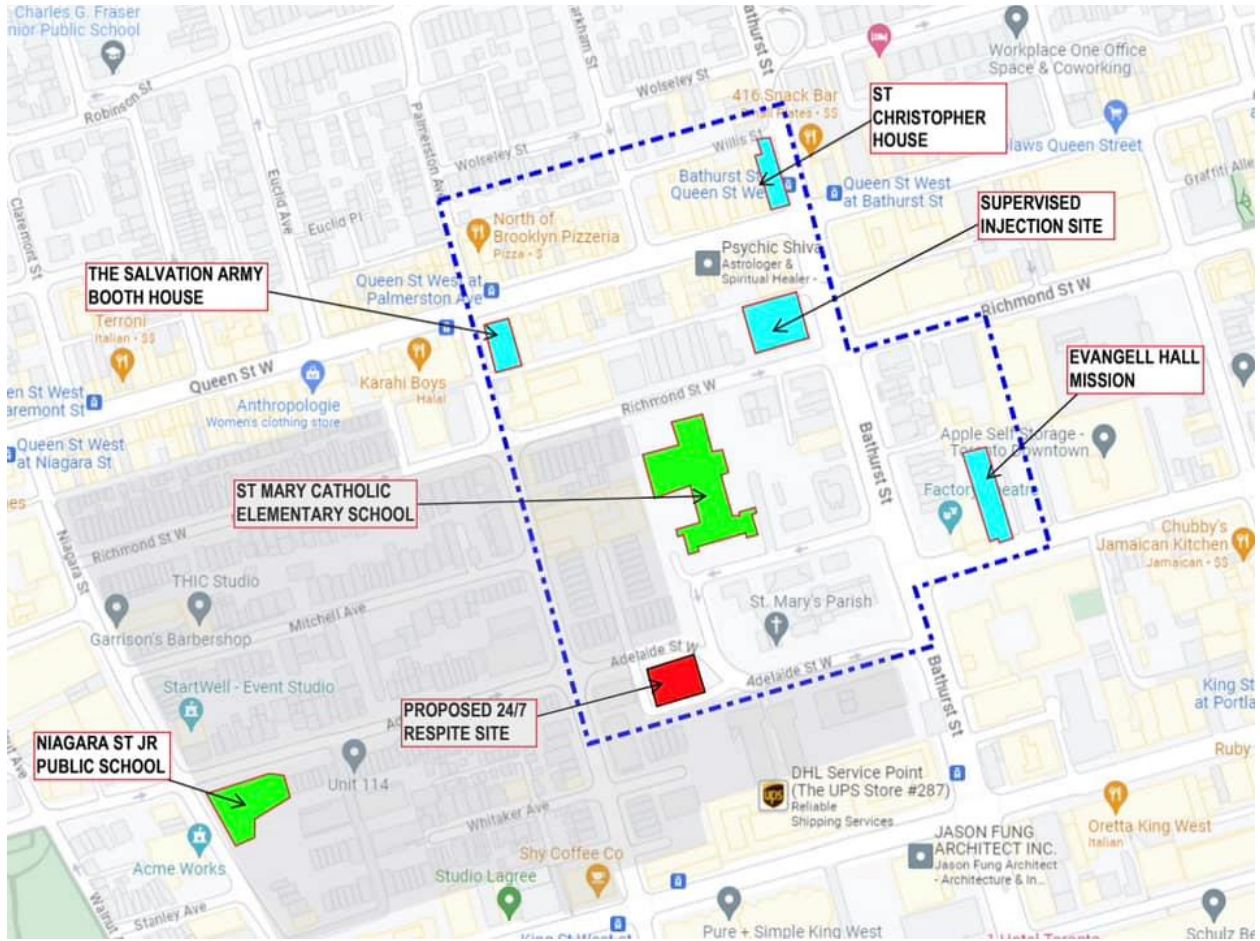


FIGURE 2: Visual of Proposed Site Relative to School and Injection Site



FIGURE 3: Needles and Other Drug Paraphernalia Already In Community

At Richmond & Bathurst



FIGURE 4: Needles and Other Drug Paraphernalia Already In Community

Laneway at Richmond at Queen & Bathurst Injection Site

