

Date: July 8, 2024

To: Mayor Chow and Toronto Board of Health Members

Re: Toronto Agenda Item 2024.HL14.1 — Toronto Public Health Strategic Plan 2024-2028

- This plan needs to take a more expansive approach when considering the **“harms of substance use.”** These harms extend to communities that surround supervised consumption sites and shelters/encampments.
- In promoting **“health and well-being”** and advocating **“for healthy social, natural, and built environment,”** the City of Toronto needs to consider all people, including those who live near supervised consumption sites and/or shelters and encampments in Toronto.
- The **public safety risk**, and the real **danger to personal health and well-being**, are significant for those who live near supervised consumption sites/or shelters and encampments in Toronto.
- **Mental health issues, substance use issues, anger-management issues, and a proliferation of knives and other edged weapons in shelters and encampments have resulted in deaths, assaults, and dangerous situations in the surrounding communities.**
- **Toronto Police Service incident reports** have skyrocketed in recent years. Citizens are becoming increasingly **fearful of random violence** on their streets.
- Despite hundreds of emails, letters, and deputations to City Council, the Community Economic and Development Committee, Executive Committee, and the Board of Health, the City still intends to site a replacement shelter at 629 Adelaide Street West.
- The physical constraints of 629 Adelaide Street West present significant operational issues for the shelter operator. These issues have been fully explained by those in the community who know the property, the layout of the surrounding streets and lanes, and how the area is currently used by the community..
- The proposed site for the 24-hour emergency shelter presents a troubling scenario unlike any other in Toronto. Our neighbourhood, near Queen Street West and Bathurst Street, faces the convergence of a proposed shelter, a supervised-consumption site, and numerous social services in close proximity to two elementary schools and residential areas surrounded by laneways. This **clustering of services raises legitimate public safety and public health concerns.**

- **There is no consultation and the community engagement process is flawed.** Over the past 11 months, our neighbourhood's public safety concerns have been consistently dismissed despite efforts to engage senior City of Toronto staff and Councillor Malik through various channels. There has been no proactive outreach from City of Toronto officials to even acknowledge our issues. Instead, we have been subjected to name-calling. Our **authentic concern for the health and safety of our community** was dismissed as “disingenuous.”
- It appears that neither the City nor their shelter operator cares about the health and safety of our community. **We are losing trust and faith in our elected officials and institutions.**

A profound public health crisis is literally on our doorstep without any support or acknowledgement from our public health officials. The City has put us in an untenable position.

The 24-hour emergency shelter at 629 Adelaide Street West will not be safe for the guests, the staff or the surrounding community. The site selection was the result of a badly flawed process which did not consider the physical limitations of the site or the impact on the community. Opening this site will constitute reckless endangerment of the community.

The Board of Health needs to be fully aware that there will be serious public health consequences related to this shelter relocation.

We are on public record advising you to

**ACKNOWLEDGE OUR COMMUNITY.
PROTECT OUR COMMUNITY.
CANCEL THE SHELTER AT 629 ADELAIDE STREET WEST.**

Sincerely,

Jill Patrick
Niagara Neighbours for Community Safety
Ward 10 – Spadina/Fort York