

**From:** [Joseph Salsberg](#)  
**To:** [Housing Rights Advisory Committee](#)  
**Subject:** [External Sender] Toronto Agenda item 2024.HS2.3  
**Date:** May 13, 2024 7:39:44 AM

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Hello,

I am writing on behalf of 25 homeowners. Our homes are adjacent to the propose shelter at 629 Adelaide St. West.

We are opposed to the unsafe siting of the 24-hour emergency shelter at 629 Adelaide Street West. The building is two blocks from Parkdale Queen West supervised consumption site; a 30-second walk from St. Mary's Catholic Elementary School; a two minute walk from Niagara Public School - where my children go to school, and, in the heart of a residential neighbourhood surrounded by homes such as ours.

Since learning about this facility in September, through a rumour and not from the City of Toronto, we have sent hundreds of emails in an attempt to engage Councillor Ausma Malik and Toronto Shelter and Support Services (TSSS). Despite raising legitimate concerns about public safety, we are repeatedly told by TSSS, Councillor Malik, a city-funded third-party consulting firm Barnes Management Group and the city-funded service operator St. Felix Centre — that neighbourhoods have no input into the process.

The disrespect shown towards concerned residents throughout this ordeal is indicative of a larger systemic failure to prioritize community voices in decision-making processes. By dismissing our concerns as inconsequential, city officials and Councillor Malik demonstrate an ongoing and callous disregard for the very people they are meant to serve.

There have been documented cases of the alarming trends of increased violence and social disorder in neighbourhoods where shelters, respite sites, warming centres and safe consumption sites are located. This was confirmed in a new study by the Canadian Association for Mental Health, and also with the implementation of the city's Behavioural Risk Alert Safety System (BRASS) for reporting serious violent behavior and threats within and around shelters. Also concerning are the public safety issues reported at both 25 Augusta Street and 169 Liberty Street respite sites and emphasizes the urgency for the city to stop the siting of this 24-hour emergency shelter in such close proximity to residential areas, schools and a supervised consumption site.

**Normalizing violence and open drug use in neighbourhoods is unacceptable.**

Adding to our mounting frustrations is the glaring disparity between 629 Adelaide Street West and the City of Toronto Shelter Design and Technical Guidelines, spanning 313 pages. Particularly concerning is the neglect of adequate outdoor space for shelter users. The confined asphalt perimeter of the building offers NO room for the 50 residents, their pets, and the 16 staff, leaving them with no recourse but to encroach upon private properties, parking lots, and laneways.

The ongoing homeless crisis stems from the city's longstanding inability to implement an effective affordable housing program. In lieu of permanent housing solutions, the city expends exorbitant sums on subpar, temporary shelters and respite sites housed in leased facilities, such as 629 Adelaide Street West, necessitating costly renovations. This eleventh-hour, 10-year lease of 629 Adelaide Street West is merely another temporary fix, failing to address the long-term needs of individuals grappling with homelessness, mental health issues, and substance abuse disorders. It reflects a myopic and expensive decision on the part of the City of Toronto, rather than a sustainable solution.

Finally, the absence of transparency, particularly regarding financial accountability, regarding the shelter at 629 Adelaide Street West is troubling. Despite a lease signed in September and an initial projected opening in December 2023, the facility sits vacant, with yet another postponed opening date now slated for Fall 2024.

The proposal for a 24-hour emergency shelter at 629 Adelaide Street West is not only poorly conceived but also perilously located — an irresponsible choice that demands immediate reconsideration. Our concerns are genuine, with thousands of residents publicly voicing apprehensions to Councillor Malik and the City of Toronto regarding the significant public safety risks associated with siting this shelter in the heart of our neighborhood. We are on public record advising you of our concerns.

Sarah Enriquez

President, Homeowners' Association on Joseph Salsberg Lane (a 30-second walk away from 629 Adelaide St. W)