

June 24, 2025

The New Toronto Initiative (NTI)- The South Etobicoke Community Association

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Planning and Housing Committee
City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

Email: councilmeeting@toronto.ca, Mayor Olivia Chow, Councillor Amber Morley, Gord Tanner TSSS

Subject: 2025.DM31.1 - Commencing Public Consultations for Communities Impacted by New Shelter Locations - by Councillor James Pasternak, seconded by Councillor Parthi Kandavel

<https://secure.toronto.ca/council/agenda-item.do?item=2025.DM31.1>

To the City Clerk:

Please add these comments to the agenda for the June 25, 2025 City Council meeting on item 2025.DM31.1, Commencing Public Consultations for Communities Impacted by New Shelter Locations - by Councillor James Pasternak, seconded by Councillor Parthi Kandavel

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

Request for Separate Public Meeting Dates for Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments for 6 Proposed Municipal Shelters

In collaboration with Toronto Shelter and Supportive Services, City staff have recently decided to address planning and entitlement matters through a collective approach for the six proposed municipal shelter sites, rather than treating each site individually. While this approach may seem efficient, we strongly believe that the community consultation sessions and public engagement efforts have adopted a broad, one-size-fits-all strategy that fails to adequately capture or respond to the unique needs and concerns of the local communities that will be directly impacted by the establishment of these shelters. This generalized approach undercuts the interests of these communities but also risks compromising the success of these initiatives. We urge a more tailored, site-specific consultation process that better reflects the distinct characteristics and priorities of each area.

We are writing to formally support DM31.1 and request that the City of Toronto schedule separate public meetings for the 6 Proposed Municipal Shelters. The Request to Amend the Official Plan and Zoning By-law are processes critical and distinctive to each shelter site, yet the complexity and impact will be marginalized when 6 shelter sites are considered together in a single meeting. Unless that was the intent.

At the Executive Committee meeting on June 17, 2025, 32 people from New Toronto submitted written letters and 8 individuals were scheduled to depute in opposition to EX24.4 –Leveraging City-Owned Real Estate to Support City Council Objectives. This demonstrates a significant level of public engagement, just for one of the six proposed sites. We anticipate even greater participation from our community at the upcoming public meetings where the Zoning and By-law amendments for 66 Third Street and all the other shelter sites will be

before the Planning and Housing Committee. This level of civic involvement must be met with a process that allows space for genuine and thorough public input.

Each of the six proposed sites comes with its own unique challenges and context. Pushing them all through in a single meeting risks truncating public input, diluting site-specific concerns, and ultimately whitewashing the process.

Similar to the other proposed sites, the selection of the 66 Third Street location was driven by a misinformed ‘surplus parking lot’ productivity analysis conducted by the Toronto Parking Authority, coupled with self-serving decisions made by City staff. This process completely bypassed any input from the local Councillor and excluded necessary community consultation or transparency, raising serious concerns about the integrity of the decision-making process. The lack of due diligence and disregard for local involvement further erodes trust in a system that should prioritize collaboration, fairness, and the well-being of the community it serves. This approach is not only flawed but challenges the very principles of good governance. More troubling still is the evident pattern of misrepresentation and the failure to adhere to the City's standard procedures.

But that’s where the similarity ends. In our small neighborhood of New Toronto, we are already shouldering more than our fair share of the City's housing burden. Over 64% of all RGI housing in South Etobicoke is located here, and more than 27% of our overall rental housing stock is subsidized - figures that far exceed citywide averages and those found in surrounding communities. Siting a shelter in New Toronto represents a deeply disproportionate impact on a lower-income area and underscores significant issues of bias and discrimination by the City, reflecting systemic inequities and threatening the viability of our community

In addition, the proposed shelter at 66 Third Street does not meet key requirements in the City’s own Toronto Shelter Standards. It lacks on-site green space and designated pet areas, offering only a rooftop patio that overlooks nearby homes and a seniors’ residence, raising serious privacy and safety concerns. And at just 9,246 square feet, the lot falls well short of the 15,000 square feet recommended for emergency shelters. It is the smallest of the six proposed sites which will inform unique zoning amendments both to accommodate “senior” shelter residents and supporting infrastructure. Moreover, it is the only one of the six sited on a small residential side street. Pushing this plan forward despite these clear design and safety issues threatens public trust and raises serious questions about the oversight by TSSS, CREM, and CreateTO.

There was no regional equity analysis conducted, no community meeting held, and no impact assessment made available to the public. As a result, our neighborhood feels not only disregarded, but also exploited—chosen not for its suitability, but for its perceived inability to challenge the decision. This is not a model of equitable city-building. This is an example of marginalization by convenience, and it undermines the principles of fairness, inclusion, and community partnership that should guide such critical decisions for each unique site.

We are committed to supporting affordable housing and shelters, but this must be done in a way that is fair, equitable, and reflects the true needs of the community. It is not sustainable to continue placing an outsized burden on New Toronto while other neighborhoods in South Etobicoke are not being held to a similar standard of shared responsibility. The current approach not only exacerbates inequities but risks undermining the very goals it aims to achieve.

Communities deserve the opportunity to be heard clearly and fully and this cannot happen when complex, high-impact proposals are compressed into an overly packed agenda. We would hope the goal is not to suppress dissent, particularly when the up-coming Planning and Housing Committee meeting and the following July 23rd City Council will be the only formal opportunities in the shelter process left where elected Councillors are permitted to vote. Every other channel for public challenge or appeal has been shut down by the City. To now limit the time and space for public scrutiny would send a clear message that even this final democratic safeguard is being rubber stamped and treated as a mere formality by the City.

Separating these meetings will:

- Promote greater transparency and understanding of each proposal;
- Allow more residents and stakeholders to engage meaningfully;
- Prevent the procedural sidelining of legitimate concerns; and
- Improve the quality of dialogue between the public, City staff, and Council.

We urge the City to prioritize democratic process and community voice by scheduling distinct meetings for these fundamentally different sites so that each site receives the consideration and time it warrants.

Sincerely,

The New Toronto Initiative