

To the City of Toronto Economic and Committee development Committee

July 7, 2025

Item - 2025.EC22.3

Dear Committee members,

The **question of scale** seems to be at the centre of what's blocking timely remedies for homelessness in the city.

I write as a local researcher who has been studying, for 40 years, how Toronto's government takes care of our public spaces. During that time the pendulum has swung several times between the poles of *BIG (scale) is beautiful* and *SMALL (scale) is beautiful*. Right now it's on BIG, and I hope City Council can start it going back a bit more in the other direction. With a nudge from your committee.

The motto of the group I belong to: what's needed is both **practical** and **theoretical** research.

For this agenda item, practical includes opening the door to what the "Crisis in the City" group proposes: "tiny home communities as interim steps until more RGI housing can be built."

Theoretical means the city also doing the second thing the group proposes: "engaging more with individuals and organizations from the community who want to help the City address the crisis of homelessness." Engaging not only for meetings, but for practical action.

And that means including all the different points of view. The letter from David Walsh says that their affiliated groups just get boilerplate form letter replies when they make action proposals to the city. Meantime, people in my neighbourhood, working for well over a year to get the remaining park campers to move from Dufferin Grove Park into more suitable housing, say they have had the same experience when they ask the city for decisive action.

Truly including all points of view is the crucial theoretical part. Welcoming the hands-on people, from beyond city hall, to test out how "tiny homes communities" can work in this city is one timely, small-scale element of doing the practical part.

From steadfast urbanist Jane Jacobs: "*The more that cities can make of their own ordinary people's capacities for economic and social invention and experiment, the more useful and valuable cities become – not only for their own people but also for their nations.*"

Exactly. Let's get started --

Jutta Mason

