

From: [Lois Dellert](#)
To: [Economic and Community Development](#)
Cc: [Premier of Ontario | Premier ministre de l'Ontario](#); [Councillor Malik](#); [Mayor Chow](#); chi.nguyen@toronto.ca; [Chris Glover-CO](#); [Gordon Tanner](#); [Paul Johnson \(City Manager\)](#); [Kate Bassil](#)
Subject: [External Sender] EC22.3 — Please post my letter as a web link
Date: July 8, 2025 12:32:04 PM

TO: Senior City of Toronto Staff, Mayor Chow, and City Council,

Demand for Full Public Inquiry:

The use of homeless shelters, in residential neighbourhoods, to house persons with serious mental health and substance abuse issues

I am writing to express my **fear, unease and concern** at the City's decision to dangerously locate a **24-hour emergency shelter program** at **629 Adelaide Street West** — a decision made **in secret**, under **delegated authority**, and with **zero transparency, zero accountability**, and **zero public genuine consultation**.

The City's own 2024 Street Needs Assessment, just released, confirms:

- **44%** of homeless people surveyed report **serious mental health challenges**
- **25%** surveyed report **substance use issues**

A dormitory-style homeless shelter is not an appropriate place for persons with serious mental health challenges and substance use issues. It is not safe for its residents, especially for those who are just trying to get back on their feet. Many homeless persons refuse to go to homeless shelter and, instead, set up encampments in our parks.

Why has this high-risk, high-needs facility been sited in the centre **of a residential neighbourhood**, surrounded by **homes, laneways, elementary schools, and small businesses**? We have asked for, and not received, a comprehensive **public safety plan**.

This shelter will be **distributing needles, pipes, and drug-use paraphernalia within metres of children and homes**. This is a **disregard** for neighbourhood safety.

St. Felix Centre has **no experience running a 24/7 shelter of this size, risk level, or complexity**. This is a **disaster waiting to happen**.

Job ads for **"Shelter Support - Relief"** staff were just posted by St Felix Centre. Required qualifications? A single year of experience and, unbelievably, a willingness to **"witness drug use (intravenous, nasal, and oral)"** and **"monitor the environment for safety."**

Will drug use be tolerated inside the Shelter? What is the **"environment"** that is referred to?

It should be clear that:

- Drug use on the shelter property at 629 Adelaide Street West is illegal.
- 629 Adelaide has **NO** outdoor space.

- It is surrounded on all sides by homes, laneways, parking lots, and is 54 METRES from a school.

We have urgent and serious questions:

- What criteria were used to select this site?
- Is the site zoning legal?
- Who made this decision, and based on what risk assessments?
- What are the full **financial costs**, and who signed off on them?
- What consideration — if any — was given to **public safety, school proximity, and the rights of neighbourhood residents**?
- Should persons with serious mental health and substance abuse issues be housed in Emergency Shelters?
- Do the staff operating the shelter have the experience and training to deal with persons with serious mental health and substance abuse issues?
- What is the threshold of social chaos that is deemed “acceptable” for a neighbourhood?

We are calling for a **FULL PUBLIC INQUIRY** into the siting of this shelter at 629 Adelaide Street West. This inquiry must be **independent, transparent, and accountable**, and must address:

1. All costs related to acquisition, renovation, staffing, and operations;
2. The selection criteria and decision-making process used by City staff and Council;
3. The operational qualifications (or lack thereof) of **St. Felix Centre**;
4. All communications, internal documents, and consultation records;
5. The complete absence of meaningful public consultation and the impact on community safety;
6. The housing of persons with serious mental health and substance abuse issues in Shelters.

This process of locating and opening this shelter **side-stepped democratic processes** and has **eroded public trust**.

We are fearful, on edge and concerned for our neighbourhood and for those who desperately need treatment.

We deserve answers. Thank you.

Sincerely,
Lois Dellert
Yves Talbot

654 Richmond St W