

From: [Shula K.](#)
To: [Economic and Community Development](#)
Subject: [External Sender] My comments for 2025.EC22.3 on July 9, 2025 Economic and Community Development Committee
Date: July 9, 2025 5:07:22 AM

To the City Clerk:

Please add my comments to the agenda for the July 9, 2025 Economic and Community Development Committee meeting on item 2025.EC22.3, Highlights of the 2024 Street Needs Assessment and advancing the City's Shelter Infrastructure

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

Comments:

July 8, 2025

Dear Chair Councillor Bravo and Members of the
Economic and Community Development Committee

Re: Support for Item #3a – Micro-Shelters & Two-Steps-Home Pilot

As a concerned Toronto resident and a local volunteer, I am writing to express my strong support for Item #3a: Micro-Shelters, with particular endorsement of the pilot project proposed by Two-Steps-Home (2SH), to be presented at your July 9 meeting.

Toronto is facing a humanitarian emergency. In June 2023, an average of 273 people were turned away from shelters each night, the highest number ever recorded, and a 175% increase from the previous year (CityNews, July 2023). The 2024 Street Needs Assessment identified 15,418 unhoused individuals which is more than double the 7,300-figure highlighted in 2021 (CP24, July 2025). These figures underscore the urgency for bold, innovative, and tailored action.

Why Micro-Shelters and the 2SH Pilot Matter:

The Two-Steps-Home pilot offers a pragmatic, compassionate solution emphasizing speed, dignity, and adaptability. Unlike traditional shelters, which are often full or unfit for people with complex needs, micro-shelter communities allow for more responsive, person-centred approaches.

Many people experiencing homelessness do not access shelters because they are unsafe, inaccessible, or retraumatizing, especially for:

- Youth navigating instability and trauma
- Seniors facing health decline and displacement
- Refugees and newcomers need safe, transitional housing
- Women and survivors of violence requiring trauma-informed care
- Individuals with mental health or substance use challenges in need of supportive pathways

The one-size-fits-all model fails too many. Micro-shelters are a customizable, community-supported alternative with proven success.

Evidence from Other Canadian Cities:

We are not starting from scratch. Other municipalities have already demonstrated that micro-shelters work:

- o Fredericton (12 Neighbours): 96 tiny homes built between 2021–2024 with \$13.3M in funding; residents pay 30% of their income toward rent (CMHC, 2023).
- o Kitchener-Waterloo: Micro-shelters on donated land have housed 40–50 people since 2020, with strong local backing and replicability.

These models are faster to build, more cost-effective, and yield better long-term outcomes than large-scale emergency shelters.

Fiscal Realities:

Toronto is currently spending over \$6,000/month per refugee to house people in hotels, partially funded through the federal Interim Housing Assistance Program (\$544 million in 2023–2024). Micro-shelters could dramatically reduce these expenses while improving service access and housing stability.

Encampments & Legal Pressures:

Recent municipal and provincial policy shifts have ramped up enforcement against encampments. But these actions, absent alternatives, only:

- Displace and retraumatize unhoused residents

- Lead to re-encampments in other areas
- Diverts limited city resources toward policing, emergency, and healthcare services that are already overburdened.

The only ethical and strategic path forward is to expand transitional housing like micro-shelter villages, in partnership with affected communities.

Housing is recognized as a human right by international law, by Canada's National Housing Strategy, and by the City of Toronto through its own Housing Charter. But rights must be reflected in action. When practical and evidence-based solutions like micro-shelters are not meaningfully supported or implemented, we fall short of that commitment. Choosing not to explore such solutions is not just a missed opportunity, it is a missed obligation.

I respectfully urge the Committee to

1.

Approve and fund the Two-Steps-Home pilot project without delay.

2.

Identify and activate additional micro-shelter sites, including City- or TTC-owned unused land.

3.

Streamline approvals by waiving unnecessary and outdated zoning or distance barriers.

4.

Partner with local organizations and people with lived experience to co-design and manage sites.

5.

Develop dedicated housing pathways for high-needs groups: seniors, youth, women, refugees, and individuals with mental health or substance use challenges.

6.

Track and publicly report outcomes, including cost per resident, housing transitions, and well-being indicators.

Toronto's shelter system is over capacity, and long-term capital plans leading to 2033 won't address today's urgent needs. Micro-shelters offer a practical, cost-effective solution rooted in evidence and lived experience. Supporting this pilot is a step toward fulfilling our commitments to equity, dignity, and the right to housing.

Thank you for your leadership on this critical issue.

Sincerely,

Shula Katz