

July 9, 2025

Dear Committee Members,

I am writing to endorse the Micro Shelter proposal.

It is salient that this proposal is coming to Economic and Community Development Committee (ECDC) along side the Street Needs Assessment (SNA) showing a 200% increase in the number of individuals living in encampments since 2018.

Those of us supporting individuals transitioning to shelters and supportive housing from living outdoors can attest to the complex challenges experienced by those making the transition.

As we grapple with the stark realities of homelessness in 2025, we need to reach for bold solutions. The data confirms the need to proceed with the creation of shelters to meet the needs of the populations we serve. Let's not lose sight of the fact that housing and not shelters are the goal. Individuals with long histories of shelter and street homelessness become deskilled. The Micro Shelter proposal offers an interim step to support individuals experiencing homelessness in building the skills required to become good tenants.

Any micro shelter program must include strong community engagement, support services, and clearly defined pathways to housing. A robust skills training and responsibility matrix can support an effective matching component designed to assure successful housing outcomes and alleviate some to the greatest challenges faced by the supportive housing sector.

As we build out the model for Micro Shelters, we have an opportunity to respond to unique population needs that speak to the stark challenges faced by those overrepresented populations in the SNA.

In many ways, I see the Micro Homes initiative as a way to revisit a 'housing preparedness' model that harkens back to pre-Housing First principles. This initiative is not in lieu of, but adjacent to the Housing First work that continues to be paramount yet challenging given the absence of supportive, affordable housing in our city today.

Best regards,

David Reycraft

President, Toronto Shelter Network



