

**Submission to the Economic and Community Development Committee  
Re: Expanding Emergency Shelter Infrastructure in Toronto EC22.3**

**From:** Chiara Padovani, North York Harvest Food Bank

**Date:** July 8, 2025

Dear Chair Councillor Bravo and Members of the Committee,

On behalf of North York Harvest Food Bank, I am writing in strong support of the Homelessness Services Capital Infrastructure Strategy (HSCIS) and the urgent development of new, purpose-built shelter spaces across Toronto.

As the primary food bank serving northern Toronto, we see first hand the tragic impacts of the housing affordability crisis. Nearly three quarters (73%) of the people accessing food banks in Toronto are living in deep core housing need, putting them at high risk of eviction and homelessness. Worse still, 20% are spending 100% of their income or more on rent—leaving no money for food, clothing, transit, or other necessities.

The proposed 1,600 new shelter spaces are not just timely, they are essential. These must be developed in collaboration with people with lived and living experience, designed with flexibility for future conversion to permanent housing, and operated with integrated supports including harm reduction, mental health care, and client-centred case management.

As outlined by previous submissions from community agencies who have called for, this moment calls for:

- Purpose-built, smaller shelters that are community-integrated and dignity-focused
- An equitable distribution of shelter services across all wards
- A long-term view that links emergency response with the broader HousingTO 2020–2030 Action Plan
- Sector-wide funding parity and multi-year operational stability

Please move forward swiftly with the implementation of new shelter sites and long-term housing solutions. Let this be the moment we choose care over complacency—and possibility over postponement.

Sincerely,

Chiara Padovani  
Community Engagement and Advocacy  
North York Harvest Food Bank  
[chiara@northyorkharvest.com](mailto:chiara@northyorkharvest.com)