

**Re: 2025.EC22.3 - Highlights of the 2024 Street Needs Assessment and advancing the City's Shelter Infrastructure**

Dear Economic and Community Development Committee,

I urge the Economic and Community Development Committee to **fully retain delegated authority for staff to select shelter sites** and to not restrict that power in any way.

Citing the Toronto Underhoused & Homeless Union's letter regarding motion 2025.DM31.1, opening this process to public debate invites a Pandora's Box of dehumanization of unhoused people and will only result in delay and the proliferation of hate rather than better community planning.

I have also written and spoken before about how these considerations go against our ethics as urban planners, social workers and so much more; and plainly spit in the face of the Official Plan. Homelessness has increased over 100% between the 2021 Street Needs Assessment and the newest report from 2024. Black, 2SLGBTQ+ and foster care-involved folks disproportionately experience homelessness relative to the general population and Indigenous people specifically experience overrepresentation in the homeless population by a factor of three times.

It is not only important we continue with the current policy direction and govern with human rights at its core, but stave off further decline. It is incredibly difficult for youth and marginalized peoples alike to obtain housing; to move away from abusive and hostile co-tenancy and living situations and to advance in life. This is especially the case in a world where large language model AI and corporate monopolies threaten many potential jobs that would normally provide the salaries to cover housing costs and restrict the potential to start new businesses or work self-employed.

I urge to ECDC consider the positive economic and sociopolitical benefits of retaining the current process and of building these necessary shelters and housing. The cost savings from moving away from the shelter hotel model can be reinvested into other City programs; not to mention the manifold cost savings in other services and categories accrued from people having improved quality of life in shelter and housing. Not having to stay in the hospital as long, not having to be detained in prisons known to be in horrible condition and routinely violate prisoners' own rights.

Providing the necessary foundations to sustain and grow existing communities and their social connections is a powerful salve against the rising tide of fascism, nativism and xenophobic sentiment we are seeing in politics at all levels in Canada and across the world. The fact that election time for councillors is nigh does not excuse cowardice and inaction. Even if approving these plans risks one's individual seat next year, it is better

than excusing and enabling hate to proliferate and turning a blind eye to homeless death amid swarms or other attacks. Do not enable democratic backsliding; do better.

Please continue with and approve the recommendations from Shelter and Support Services' report to ECDC and Council.

Sincerely,  
Thaddeus W. Sherlock