

To: Economic and Community Development Committee - September 16, 2025

Re: [Agenda Item History - 2025.EC23.6](#)

Toronto has a crisis of homelessness, and the City needs to respond to this situation as an emergency.

City data show “the numbers have soared to over 15,400, and shelters in Toronto have been turning away more than 200 people every night. And the Province has recently outlawed encampments.

[Number of homeless in Toronto doubled in 3.5 years - The Trillium](#) – July 7, 2025.

The City is working to develop new affordable housing projects and shelters but these projects take 4 to 10 years to plan and build. And there are additional criteria and requirements for shelters that mean longer delays. For example, the proposed shelter at 2299 Dundas St West has been underway for over 5 years and the recent delays are due to the City’s new environmental standards for city buildings.

Governments have spent huge sums of money on hotel rooms in cities across Ontario, and the Federal government is threatening to cut funding for refugees and asylum seekers.

If this was a flood, hurricane or some other emergency there would be an immediate response, but with the crisis of homelessness there has been little immediate action.

Here are some options that the City should be considering for more beds, and I am sure there are many more options that are available:

74 Wellesley Street West is a building owned by the Catholic School Board. More than 30 sisters lived previously on the upper floors, and their rooms have been sitting empty for over 5 years since they moved to retirement homes.

95 St Joseph Street near Bay & Wellesley is a building with over 80 rooms, and much of the building has been empty for several years since the priests moved to retirement homes. There is a proposal by the new owner to demolish this building to build condos, but with current market condition, the condo project is on hold. The developer could be asked to let the city use the building for an emergency shelter for this winter.

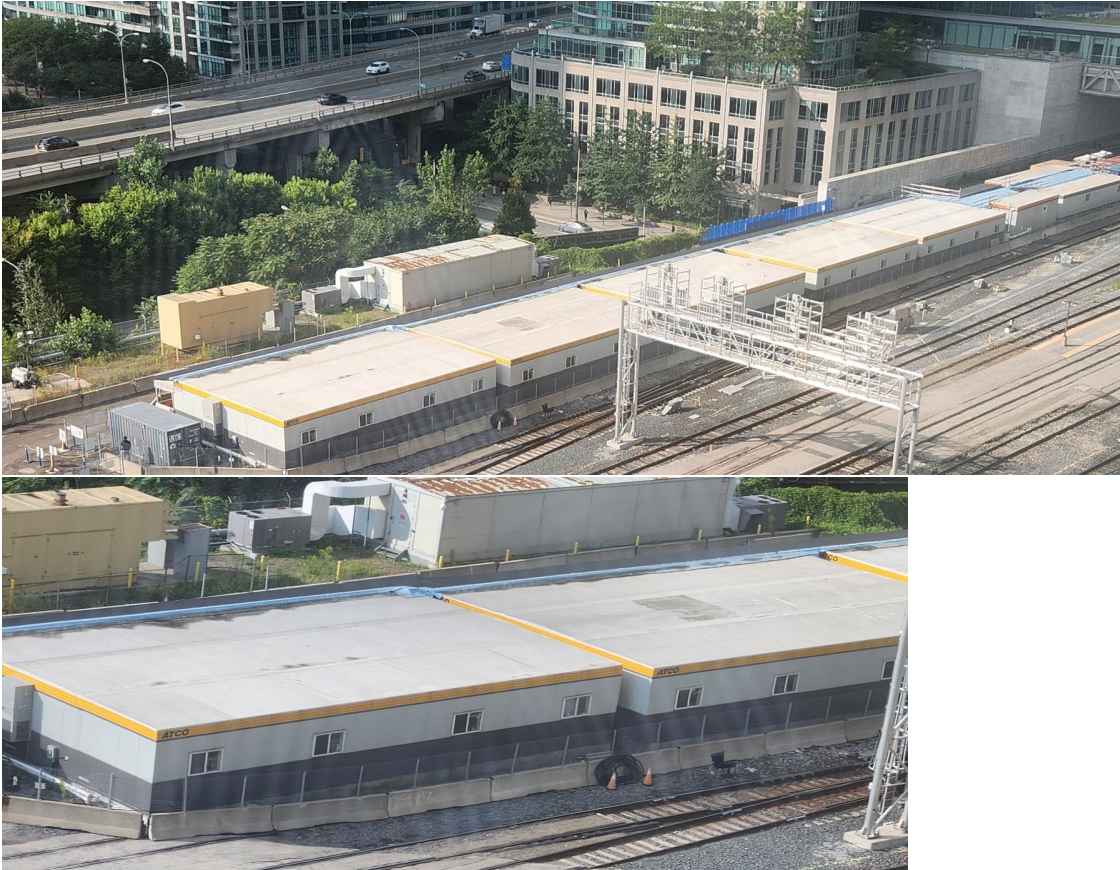
95 St Joseph Street - possible interim shelter - for 6 months - potential for 80 + rooms



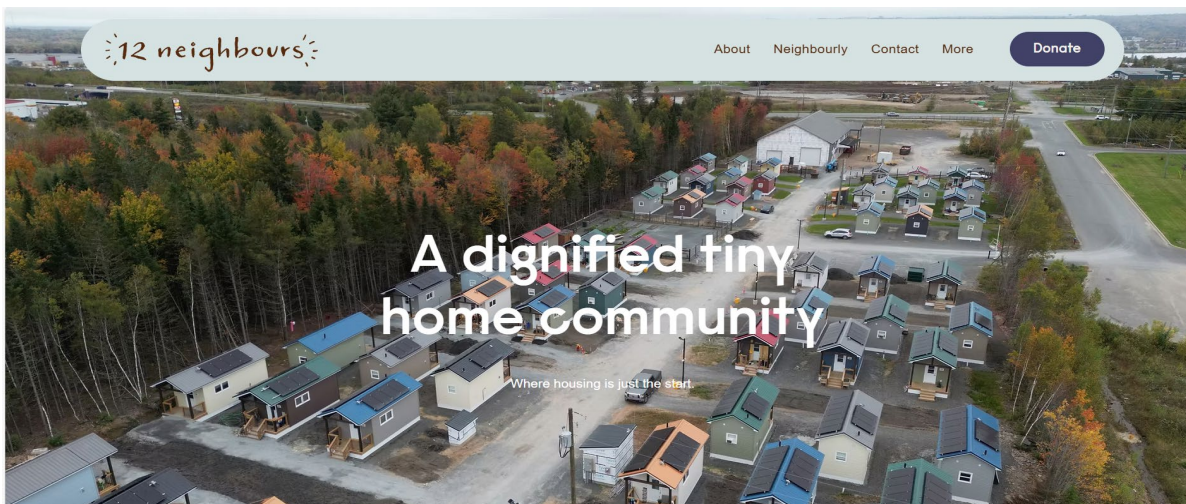
Another option to consider is prefab buildings.

Our governments have been able to construct prefab buildings in the city for many projects. Why can we not bring in similar prefab buildings to address the homeless crisis. Here is an example of buildings for work & housing – near Yonge & Front

Atco Prefab Buildings for Work & Housing – near Yonge & Front



Frederickton NB is a city with a population of 72,000. The community has recently completed a Tiny Home Community of 100 units.



There are many TTC and City parking lots that could be suitable sites for Tiny Homes.

A recent article by Matt Elliott of the Toronto Star reported on TTC's parking lots.

[The TTC operates 30 commuter parking lots at subway stations, with a total of 13,981 parking spaces².](#)

[However, only ten lots are well used,](#)

From: Matt Elliott <graphicmatt@gmail.com>

Sent: May 20, 2025 5:02 PM

To: David Walsh <david@dwalsh.ca>

Hey David = Thanks for reaching out! I've been VERY interested in this subject, especially the Two Step Homes proposal that van Nostrand is working on. I hope to pitch a Star article on this soon but in the meantime, please feel free to keep me in the loop on any news or developments.

We need to ask: "Why are 200 people per night being turned away from shelters, and why has the City been stalling for years, and not supporting community initiatives, such as the proposals of architect John van Nostrand. No one should be forced to sleep outside due to the fact that there is no place available for them.

The City must live up to its **EQUITY IMPACT STATEMENT that states:**

"Ensuring people experiencing homelessness, including those sleeping outdoors, in encampments or other public spaces, have access to safe, high-quality emergency shelter, adequate support services and to permanent housing opportunities are all important determinants of health and essential to the inherent dignity and well-being of the person and to building healthy, sustainable communities."

The City's Sept 8th Report from the General Manager of Toronto Shelter and Support Services, states: "More than 16,355 people were served through the programs of the emergency shelters, respites and warming centres." This is clearly not enough and the City must make radical changes in its search for other options to expand its emergency responses.

Sincerely,

David Walsh

Crisis in in Our City Network