



July 14, 2025

Attn: Councillor Gord Perks (Chair) and Members of Planning and Housing Committee

Re: Item PH23.3 - Advancing Six Sites for the Homelessness Services Capital Infrastructure Strategy (HSCIS) - City-Initiated Official Plan Amendment and Six Zoning By-law Amendments - Decision Report - Approval

Dear Chair Perks and Members of Planning and Housing Committee,

Hello, my name is Lynn Walker and I am an executive member of the Toronto Underhoused and Homeless Union.

I support the proposed zoning changes.

I moved back to Toronto in 2012 and shared 1st floor of a bungalow with my son. One day, we received notice in didn't pay the rent, which was not true – they always came and picked it up. Fighting this issue at the tribunal took 18 months. And we had to find a new place in the meantime. Then we found a place, which we were at for 6 years until my landlord started to intimidate me. She came in the unit when I wasn't there, banged on my door super loud and compulsively. She started stealing my mail and locking the mailbox. This stressed me out so much that I started going downtown and sleeping on the street. I also slept on my sons floor, stayed a couple weeks with my great niece, and then moved into a tent in Allen Gardens Park in September of 2021.

There were tents already there, and as people came we made a circle and became a community. We shared clothes, food and things we needed. We went through being told to leave or our or they would be burnt down. I became friends with the indigenous people who would gather around to chat and laugh and have a good time.

On November 22nd 2021 I went to the hospital because feet were in a lot of pain. I found out that they got frostbitten. Many times I went through this - many, many times. The weather was freezing, and there was extreme cold weather warnings of below 30. I had a list of places to go none were open close by on the weekend! So I went all the way down to Town Hall – when I finally got there, I found out it was not a warming station anymore for the last 8 years! This resource I was given was horribly out of date. That made me so upset and I screamed at the top of my lungs in the bitter cold. I was far away from my tent and completely overwhelmed.

I finally had my tribunal meeting in March of the following year, and go figure – I won my case. But now I lived in Allen Gardens.

The people that camped in that park were for the most part, incredible people. Several people were highly educated. People who lost their jobs like me, or people who were fleeing abusive situations, or people coping with extreme trauma or grief. But even so, most everyone cared for each other, and protected each other. We brought each other food, water, clothing, and got help for each other when we needed it. We did our best in survival mode circumstances. And still, we were made to look like bad or lazy people, who just weren't trying hard enough.

It's easier to write us off, which is why we are here. I am here to voice for the thousands of people that are homeless right now, who hit hard times like me – they must have options for housing now, before it is too late. Sadly during my time at Allen Gardens many people died from freezing to death, violence, and overdoses. There were also many that we were able were to save because of Naloxone. But many are not making it out of these situations alive! We must demand housing programs and subsidies now, we must see aggressive measures be taken in building shelters. We do not have time to waste.

Thank you for your time.

Sincerely,

Lynn Walker

