

From: [Philip Stonhouse](#)
To: [Planning and Housing](#)
Subject: [External Sender] Response to Shelter proposal for 3838 Bloor St. West
Date: April 14, 2026 12:20:45 PM

Hello,

I am writing on behalf of many churches and Christian leaders in Central Etobicoke.

We are in support of the upcoming Women's Shelter.

There are three things that we would like to see from this shelter and integrated into the shelter system:

1. Harm Reduction: Most people will acknowledge the benefits of harm reduction as we see lives saved. There are limits to it's benefits, though, especially within a controlled shelter system. We know that having some abstinence based shelters would lead to greater benefits for the clients, staff and communities - whether this is abstinence just from hard drugs or other substances as well. A more stable community with similar goals will help all those involved. As such we would like to propose that 3838 Bloor St. W not be a harm reduction sight, especially considering the children's facilities that will be going up at the new Etobicoke Civic Centre, and the others already in the area. We also propose that as Toronto opens more sights in the coming years, they use them as a pilot project to test out abstinence based facilities (what abstinence means in each scenario may be different). Many operators already do this with subsets of their populations to great affect.
2. Violence: The current shelter systems way of managing violence within and outside of the premise is greatly lacking in effectiveness. Unless it becomes such an issue that police need to be involved someone can not be kicked out (only transferred, which can take days or longer). Violence in all of its forms is destabilizing. In a shelter people are already destabilized and so layering in trauma and fear responses will only hinder their betterment (and staff health). We propose a zero tolerance system with violence with a potential waiting period depending on the seriousness and repetition of the offence.
3. More Particularity in our shelters: As our shelter system expands and as we are already looking at having client numbers far over 5,000 this gives us opportunity to have our shelters reflect more particular care that will better fit the client, the staff and the community. We already have a referral and transfer calling centre that could help facilitate this. We have the numbers and the spaces, even accounting for the variability of clients, to have many more particularized shelters. On top of providing better care, this would also streamline hours and the staff needs at each sight. We propose that 3838 Bloor St. is even more specialized fitting to the gifts of the area and that other new shelters do the same.

Example: 3838 Bloor St. W. The proximity to the new civic centre, Kipling station, and

many other amenities make it great for those that are trying to get out of the shelter system. We know our neighbors and support each other like an old fashioned neighborhood. St. Matthew's Islington also houses many AA and GA groups, including a women's group. 3838 Bloor St. W could easily be an abstinence based women's shelter for those actively seeking a better life (with a potential further specialization for those that are recovering from alcoholism). The mutual support and possibility is already there.

This comes from a lot of experience and discussions with operators, clients, and neighbors that back up need for this, but I have limited sharing this so to simplify it.

Please reach out if there are any further questions.

God bless you.

Your brother in Christ,
Rev. Philip Stonhouse

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