

May 6, 2026

Dear Chair and Committee Members,

Re: PH30.3 - 3838 Bloor Street West - Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment Application

My name is Shannon Spencer, and I am writing on behalf of Social Planning Toronto, an organization dedicated to advancing equity, social justice, and quality of life in Toronto, and to support a rights-based approach to housing. I am writing to express our strong support for the proposed zoning and Official Plan amendments for the women's shelter at 3838 Bloor Street West.

Firstly, we would like to note that shelters are already a permitted use at this site. The proposal is also consistent with the Provincial Policy Statement, which calls for a full range of housing options in every community. This purpose-built shelter is also consistent with urban design guidelines, planning legislation, and the surrounding neighbourhood context. Additionally, it is within 500 metres of the subway station and transit, making it accessible and reducing the need for car dependency and parking requirements, consistent with the city's Official Plan.

As of October 2024, over [15,000 people](#) in Toronto were experiencing homelessness. This rate has more than doubled over three years. Simultaneously, the [median age at death](#) for women experiencing homelessness in the city decreased from 43 years to 36 years within a year. These trends underscore the urgent and great need for shelters, which are a critical entry point to long-term housing.

The difficult reality is that homelessness can affect anyone, often with little warning. Across our work and that of our partners, we have seen how a lack of shelter exacerbates other issues, including physical and mental health, employment, and overall wellbeing. Homelessness is not an individual failure, but an outcome of policy decisions and systemic barriers. While shelters are not the answer to homelessness, they are an essential part of the housing continuum, and should be located in neighbourhoods, like any other essential public service. This shelter will provide safety, dignity, and pathways to permanent housing for women, aligning with the Official Plan's vision of an inclusive and caring city through equitable planning.

In supporting these amendments, we respectfully recommend that the City:

- Approve the Official Plan and zoning amendments to facilitate the building of a new women's shelter at 3838 Bloor Street.

In closing, we urge you to lead with urgency, compassion, and a commitment to housing as a human right.

Respectfully,
Shannon Spencer
Community Planner, Social Planning Toronto