

Federation
of Citizens'
Associations
of Ottawa

fca-fac

Fédération
des associations
civiques
d'Ottawa

March 12, 2025

Sent via email to:
Mayor Mark Sutcliffe
City of Ottawa
110 Laurier Avenue West, 4th Floor
Ottawa, ON K1P 1J1

Cc: City Councillors

Reference: Zoning By-law Amendment (File No. D02-02-25-0011)

Dear Mayor Sutcliffe,

The Federation of Citizen Associations (FCA) is pleased to bring to your attention its perspectives regarding the proposed amendment to the shelter zoning bylaw. We acknowledge the urgent need to address homelessness in our city and we continue to call for a Housing First approach with City resources focused on this goal.

The FCA supports the City's efforts, outlined in the Housing and Homelessness Plan, to divert the homeless, especially families, from emergency shelters and at least provide safe and secure transitional shelters to minimize emergency shelter needs and provide better outcomes for both singles and families. Transitional shelters should reduce the delays in obtaining housing while providing better support for the homeless who need social and health services.

We have provided a more detailed report to staff on the proposed bylaw amendment, and we propose the following way forward to allow shelters in all urban areas while addressing community concerns:

- Ensure appropriate clarity under the bylaw of definitions for emergency and transitional housing, as directed by Council: Undertake analysis of appropriate typologies based on existing context and taking into account current and future zoning.

- **Develop Clear and Transparent Equitable Distribution Policies:** Establish specific guidelines and metrics for equitable shelter distribution, ensuring that no single neighborhood is disproportionately burdened. This includes more specific direction under the City's Housing and Homelessness Plan and the budgetary process. Ensure compliance and community updates of the Emergency Shelter Standards and the Transitional Housing Standards.
- **Implement a Context-Sensitive Approach to Shelter Size and Use:** Consider the specific needs of the local client population and available resources when determining shelter size, ensuring adequate funding and comprehensive services in the context of City emergency and transitional housing standards, policies and oversight.
- **Provide for Council consideration appropriate zoning performance standards:** This includes an outline of site plan control process, holding provisions and ensuring appropriate client amenity spaces and safety, as well as measures to mitigate negative impacts including ambassador and other programs as appropriate to project and its scale.
- **Streamline Approvals While Maintaining Community Input:** Balance the need for timely responses with thorough planning, especially site plan control and meaningful community engagement.
- **Prioritize Permanent Housing Solutions:** Adopt a "Housing First" approach while ensuring that shelters serve as a bridge to permanent housing, not a long-term solution. This includes for more supportive housing as well as increased number of rooming houses as part of neighbourhood zoning where appropriate.
- **Foster Robust Community Engagement:** Implement proactive strategies to engage diverse communities, address concerns, and promote positive relationships between shelter residents and the broader community.

We believe that by working together and considering these diverse perspectives, we can develop a comprehensive and compassionate approach to addressing homelessness in our city that benefits all residents.

Sincerely,

Paul Johanis, Chair

Federation of Citizens' Associations