

Transcript Planning and Housing Committee Feb. 4, 2025

YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=h2VSA159T2E>

Below is a transcript of the discussion at the Feb. 5th, 2025 Planning and Housing Committee about:

1) A zoning bylaw change proposed by Kitchissippi Councillor Jeff Leiper (that passed: see pg: 23-25 for full motion) to expedite allowing emergency and transitional shelters, and transitional supportive housing in all urban zones before the City completes its ongoing work to update the City's Official Plan (expected by end of 2025) and,

2) Two failed motions introduced by **Barrhaven East Councillor Wilson Lo that aimed to exempt rural zones from the Leiper motion, and if that failed, a motion to exempt two sites previously considered possible sites for Sprung Structures from the zoning changes** (Lo's motions pages 3 below; & the discussion on those begins on pg. 13).

And the Leiper changes also result in no public consultations required before any shelter/supportive housing approvals. Instead, basically, the goal will be to educate the public about how the shelter and/or supportive housing work.

Green text: some dealing with the Leiper motion/urban zoning issue changes to allow for emergency and transitional shelters, and transitional supportive housing in all urban zones as defined in the City's Official Plan, is in green.

In Blue: Some text dealing with related public consultations/engagement issues, including descriptions of past participants as: affluent, aggressive, prejudiced and racist.

And, note: there was one public delegation at the meeting:

Kaite Burkholder (KB), Executive Director · Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa

(3:10 mark/approx).

Councillor Jeff Leiper: "There are three goals I want to accomplish. The first is to ensure that as applications for shelter use move forward, be they staff initiated or third party, that the **conversation that we have with residents is an honest one.**

Our **Official Plan** says that shelter use would be permitted in all our zones. And until we change the comprehensive zoning bylaw, I'm worried about a disconnect between what the current zoning in our City says versus what the **Official Plan** says. So I think this is something that our residents find frustrating right across the entire planning process, that the Official Plan often dictates that we as a Committee and Council really don't have a lot of choice except to approve things because that's what our Official Plan says. **And that is the case in respect to shelter use; if someone moves forward with shelter use rezoning, it is really black and white on us that if it is just the change of use, that we have to approve it because it is what the OP says; we don't have grounds to refuse things if the OP doesn't give us those grounds.** The second thing I am trying to accomplish is to ensure that until we pass the new comprehensive zoning bylaw, in hopefully December, that there is the flexibility for either the City or third parties to have new shelters in all zones without having to go through expensive, time-consuming rezoning processes. (3:13:43). A rezoning process, even if it were light (speed)? would take three, four, five months.

"One of the councillors was talking to me this morning about some of what we are seeing happening in the US and the potential for a greater number of people crossing the border. We're going to have to be nimble over the course of the next year and ensuring that our zoning is not a hurdle to putting a new shelter in, is going to be critical.

"The third thing, and it's a relatively small one, but I'm cognizant of the workload on staff. If we can accelerate this proposal now, that will be one less thing staff have to do as we move toward the comprehensive zoning bylaw in December.

3:14:37

"Colleagues, people have asked me why not accelerate other things in the zoning bylaw? We've got a huge swath of activity across our zonings bylaw. This is one area where it is binary. **The Official Plan basically writes the new bylaw.** There is no question of nuance, there is no question of disagreement over wording. The Official Plan is really, really clear, whereas in pretty much every other sphere in what we are talking about in the OP exercise, there is room for disagreement between reasonable people.

"I'm not willing to short circuit discussions where there is legitimate grounds for disagreement and for searching for nuance. But this one? The Official Plan is clear. The OP makes it very clear that we will not put restrictions in place for shelter use in any zone. So I am hoping to accelerate that change today and I hope I have your support."

(3:15:30)

No staff presentation as it is a Councillor motion. One delegation and one motion -- on table before delegation.

Councillor Wilson Lo introduces motion to not include the suburbs and to protect two sites previously considered for Sprung Structures to remain exempt.

"It is actually two (motions)_. Therefore be it resolved that the **motion be amended to refer only to downtown, Inner Urban, and Outer Urban transects...**

Written version : Therefore be it resolved that motion ACS2025-OCC-CCS-0002, Shelter Use in All Zones, be amended to apply only to the downtown, inner urban, and outer urban transects.

THEREFORE BE IT RESOLVED that staff be directed to bring forward a proposed amendment to Bylaw 2008-250 that would permit shelter use in all urban zones in the downtown, inner urban, and outer urban transects, consistent with the proposal in the draft comprehensive zoning bylaw and Official Plan at the earliest opportunity and,

Therefore be it resolved that motion ACS2025-OCC-CCS-0002, Shelter Use in All Zones, be amended to include 1005/1045 Greenbank Road and 3311 Woodroffe Ave on sites required to seek a rezoning to permit shelter as a use.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED THAT regardless of the modifications to Bylaw 2008-250 effected as a result of this motion, any shelter use at 40 Hearst Way, 1005/1045 Greenbank Road, and 3311 Woodroffe Avenue, (as sites that) would be required to seek a rezoning to permit shelter as a use, and that staff provide the necessary zoning language to give effect to this declaration."

I will speak to it later. (Starts on pg 13)

3:17 (approx time on youtube)

Delegation: Kaite Burkholder (KB), Executive Director · Alliance to End Homelessness Ottawa, Executive Director at Alliance to End Homelessness

KB: "On behalf of the Alliance I am glad to see a motion that recognizes people need housing services and supports in every part of our community enabling City staff and community partners to react quickly to community needs is essential to respond to a rapidly changing homelessness crisis.

"This motion is important to protect future residents and community partners who will be living in new affordable housing builds from increasingly aggressive community consultations. While it's valuable for community members to be engaged in housing developments, the consultation process has become increasingly aggressive, prejudiced and racist with some awful recent examples, as you all know, where consultations needed to be shut down. Alliance member agencies have actually had their own staff targeted by community members through these consultations, finding their private information, and being threatened, all for trying to build affordable housing.

"Consultations are meant to be a chance to ask questions, share concerns, and learn more about a new development. Instead, they have become a referendum on who gets to live in a neighbourhood. We can't keep having this conversation every time a new build for affordable housing comes, when the need is so great. I commend council and staff for moving forward with this motion to address this challenge in adding new forms of affordable housing.

"I'd also like to highlight some pieces about the motion that are not entirely clear, and moving forward would be helpful in future zoning discussions, particularly as they have significant impacts on how we plan our housing and homelessness system. **There's several definitions for emergency shelter and transitional shelters in city documents with inconsistencies between the two.**

"Unfortunately, there's **not a whole lot of clarity on the distinctions between an emergency shelter and transitional shelter, and the motion uses both of these terms. Both definitions state that support services are provided and you see almost interchangeable terms -- *short term* accommodations for shelter and *temporary* accommodations for transitional shelter. Neither mentions, arguably, the most important one is a congregate setting, and one is where you typically have your own unit. The difference between these two is significant and people experience more stability when they have a lock and key.**

"Emergency shelters are absolutely critical to the housing and homelessness system. **If someone is in a crisis, we need a safe place for them to go and for a short period of time. Shelter stays are intended to be very brief and non recurring. Despite this goal, however, in recent years, in the face of overwhelming exhaustion and the very real fact that we do not want people to die, we have significantly increased shelter beds in our community with services concentrated in the downtown. People do better when they have geographic choice for services. This motion addresses this barrier for many in our community who are struggling to find affordable housing and support.**

"The Alliance did a recent system inventory showing that for time limited programs across Ottawa, 77% of them extend their timelines significantly. This was particularly true for transitional housing. **It demonstrates the lack of flow we have in our current homelessness and housing system. Our existing shelters don't have the funding to maintain their current operations, meaning even less opportunity to reduce flow into shelter and support flow out of shelter. It's often said that the role of shelters is to work their way out of a job. I would refine this to say it's to work their way into a different job, providing forms of transitional and affordable housing.**

"All of our local shelters are already doing this alongside their emergency services. Not being confronted with community backlash every time that they move in this direction, is so valuable, as the motion addresses. **But despite progress in developing more transitional and supportive housing, we continue to invest in new emergency shelter beds because it seems that it is the quickest most doable action we can take. We're not alone. In Ontario we've increased emergency shelter beds by 34% since 2016. During the same period, overall homelessness has increased by 32%. In other words, we are buying homelessness.**

"My caution about this motion is that we may also be creating an unintentioned escape hatch to keep adding more shelter beds to our system by using the language of emergency shelter rather than increasing transitional affordable housing. **We absolutely need different forms of housing and services in our community, in every community in our city and I strongly support Council's action here. However, I urge you to be cautious that we don't increase our investment in a temporary response, but rather focus our efforts on rapidly increasing affordable housing across all wards.**

"It's incredibly challenging in the face of a crisis to see beyond the immediate need. But our housing and homelessness response requires us to do this. **The Official Plan and the 10-year plan are a key part of this critical shift in how we design, zone and plan for an end to homelessness.** We look forward to working closely

with the city as we refresh the 10-year plan this year to push for bolder better outcomes for people.

Councillor Stephanie Plante: Did anybody from planning or community social services reach out to Alliance about this motion?

KB: We have been in conversation with Community and Social Services, not as much with planning. I have had a chance to talk with a few staff members.

Plante: What I understand from reading the motion and talking to staff, now your intervention, our understanding is that something like the Mission or Salvation Army is the equivalent of a Carty House (focused on refugee women).

KB: I would say no. The name 'congregate' is the weird word here and the complexity between what is a rooming house. Those things get tricky. **I think naming the actual design of the building is important because I think that helps a bit to explain what we are talking about.**

Plante: I will give you my very real concerns. You sort of mentioned some of your staff, very sadly, had been sort of harassed and people looked for information, and whatnot. **My fear is that this is going to politicize the process even more because typically -- and I don't blame them, by the way -- but shelter staff, shelter providers, will go into communities where there is the least resistance. And those communities are typically low income, have lots of foreigners, people working multiple jobs, blue collar, etc. We saw this very clearly with the Salvation Army debate we had in Vanier.**

"I wonder if you could touch upon that, because like you said, the people who are more likely to try and influence their councillors, their MPs, their MPPs, are people who are affluent, they have time after work to do this kind of advocacy, they can come to committee, and while we are technically removing barriers, I actually think the removal of the barrier will be the thing that makes it easier for the cycle to perpetuate itself.

3:15

KB: That is a really good question, and I should clarify (who was harassed), not Alliance staff specifically, but member organizations, service providers who are private citizens and are actually getting targeted. **It's not that common, but it does happen, which is a real concern.** I think that the intention of trying to expand, and I think also people want housing in their ward, they don't want shelters necessarily. Moving forward that is certainly the approach. But I think that the danger about it being politicized, is this **feels like it actually creates space and openness and says: Everybody really has to be a part of this and every ward does**

actually need to provide services. We need geographic choice for people to access services and housing.

"And I hear what you're saying about that politicizing it, but I do think there is a levelling of how we do that, and I also think it begs the question, **I think we need to refine our consultation process. I think a lot of the time those processes feel like, exactly, folks who are more affluent, who have time, who can engage, go to the meetings; they don't always reflect the demographics of who's even in the ward, which I think is a problem in and of itself. And they literally have just become the context to say no.**

"And if you have a setting like this, and delegations like this, that is what people come and do. I know there's examples from the States and a few other places where there are different approaches to consultations that are a lot more integrated, there's even opportunities for voting, but much earlier in the process, and for individual neighbourhoods. I've even heard it targeted on individual blocks helping to set targets for affordable housing in advance of a build. So I think there is an opportunity to explore different ways of doing this.

"I think the messaging on this is going to be tough, so good luck with that (laughs), but we are also here to support you because I think that it really is important to make sure services are in every ward.

Plante: My final question: I gave the example of Carty House vs the Salvation Army and we kind of have the weird hybrid (3:16) issue that we had with the shelters that were in community centres for, mine are still there, for a while now. In your mind, which I know you've studied a lot of this, and you work in this every single day, which one is ideal, **which one is the one in the city we have to push fast forward?**

KB: Housing. (Plante/KB laughs) Affordable housing so, I mean, **on the housing spectrum, I would say within the people in the sector who are going to need not just non market, but non market with some kind of supports, permanent supportive housing is absolutely the best we can do.** Transitional, I think, there are certain populations that this now works, but still with a lock and key for the person. And we know that for refugee claimants, this is actually a pretty good approach because their time in shelter is actually quite short. And similarly for youth is actually a population that it tends to work better for.

3:17: 30

But I do think that, you know, I look at some of the examples where we see real success and I know everyone says Finland, but we brought them here, but I'll say **Finland. Their shelters have become transitional housing. Everybody gets a door, they get a lock and key, they have some space to breathe, and the**

outcomes are so much better. So I think as we look ahead, the congregate piece, even though I know it is **the cheapest, and even though I know it is the most doable when we are in panic mode and trying to keep people alive, if we keep investing in that, we will keep getting that.** There is no amount of shelter beds that are going to actually stem the flow of homelessness.

Plante: Right.

KB: If we build it, people will come and what we really need to work on is the flow issue, and in conversations with shelter, is actually diversion and prevention. And I am going to brag about our member agencies right now because the big shelters, and Sheps, and most recently we got data: they have reduced inflow into shelters by diversion approach by 5% in the last three months. That's a *big deal*. And I want to also stress, and I know this is not zoning...it is an opportunity where we can start to stem the flow and hopefully create breathing space in the rest of our shelter system, enabling us to focus on transitional spots rather than shelter beds that are in a congregate setting where we know people's outcomes are not going to be as good.

3:19

Plante: Thank you. I really agree with you on the diversion and prevention piece, and I would sort of disagree with you on the 'levelling of the playing field' piece because **I do think this will be politically leveraged by all levels of government to make sure that certain neighbourhoods stay certain neighbourhoods.**

Leiper: Thank you very much Katie for the presentation today. If the Chair will permit me, I just will say very quickly the wording of **my motion is to ask staff to come back to us with a bylaw change that is consistent with the Official Plan in addition to the comprehensive -- so the key piece is section 4.2.4 sub 2, which speaks to emergency and transitional shelter.** So I would expect to see wording that incorporates both if this passes and staff come back with the by law change.

But I did want to ask in respect to ensuring that every ward is available for shelter, whether **Councillor Lo's motion, that would take the suburbs out of my motion, whether you consider that to be appropriate or not.**

KB: I think that every ward should be in, and lots of people want to live in the suburbs. (laughs)

Leiper: Amazing.

KB: And access services there too, right? We have great community health centres that have broad catchment areas, which include the suburbs, and other services,

and I think most people don't know affordable housing is there when they're in there. It's not until something new comes in a place that people know what's there. But there's lots of people who have come from homelessness living all over the city already, so I think just to remember, people are our neighbours.

Leiper: Is there anything inappropriate about the suburbs that would preclude them from being considered for emergency or transitional shelter?

KB: I think the caution is always transit, and making sure people can access resources. So if that is the barrier, then that feels like a different discussion, but I think there is nuance there, but I think ultimately having it in every ward is really important.

Leiper: And certainly that is the intent of my motion, so that it isn't just concentrated in some neighbourhoods.

3:21

Councillor Ariel Troster: I'm curious to know...so essentially **what this motion would do would eliminate the need to come to committee to get a rezoning for this kind of specific use.** You spoke a little bit about the abuse or challenges that Alliance members have faced when trying to set up shop, whether it is transitional housing or supportive housing or shelters in specific neighbourhoods. I'm wondering if you could elaborate on why you think it is important that we remove that piece of the process, and how you think that would benefit service providers and, ultimately, people experiencing homelessness.

KB: I think there is also a difference when people are *mandated* to do consultation processes versus *inviting* neighbourhoods in. I think our community agencies do a good job of trying to engage the local community in that. And knowing that it's not necessarily you *have to* do this, but a 'we want you to understand our services, we want you to understand what community members are going to be coming to live here'. I think that's valuable and done really well by a number of agencies.

"But, yeah, as councillors you all know what it's like to get abuse at this point. And you're public figures and that doesn't make it OK and we've reached a point in our political culture where it's extremely toxic, and I would argue increasingly dangerous for folks. It strikes me as very, very concerning that private citizens are now being targeted because they are trying to build affordable housing and I just think that reforming the way we do this is going to be central to being able to change that toxicity. And I think in addition to putting a boundary around saying 'It's not OK to have these conversations in

this way, we also need to find an alternative path for folks to be engaged and involved. I don't know what that looks like yet. I know that there are other best practices, but I think ...given where we are now in the crisis, this is a really important first step. People are dying. This is a really important first step.

3:23:30

Troster: Thank you and the argument I make consistently is we have to allow staff to respond to an emergency. We have to give them those tools to not hold them up and what you had to say is really interesting because I think **we also need to manage expectations about what we're actually consulting on**, because if the city determines that there's an emergency and that we need a certain number of facilities and that they need to be all over the city.

"So, if we're not asking communities 'yes or no' and not inviting them to come and oppose a rezoning, what do you think the city should be consulting on in situations like that when one of these buildings, facilities or buildings or services comes into the neighbourhood?"

KB: Great question. I am not a zoning expert and obviously the official plan sets the groundwork for a lot of this, but I think in general, as of right zoning for a variety of structures and really helping people understand what those are, and working with the FCA and other civil service groups. And I don't know what that looks like from any kind of communications when people aren't plugged into local politics, understandable. It's hard to really get what that's going to look like, but I do think the people who come to the sessions, as Councilor Plante said, are usually pretty plugged in. **So just constant re-engagement: what are our targets, what is our goal in terms of the amount of affordable housing that needs to be built in every neighbourhood, and how can you be a part of figuring out what that looks like.**

"But to your point, really making it clear that this isn't a chance to just say no. Like we cannot continue just to say no."

3:25

Councillor Catherine Kitts: I think you just answered my first question and your delegation was diplomatic. So I just wanted to clarify the Alliance supports this motion?

KB: Yeah, we do.

Kitts: And do you get a sense, given the conversation in the last weeks that, maybe with the assumption that this motion will be passed, that local organizations are getting organized? With the assumption that this motion might come to pass, and

that things (approvals) would be easier, are local organizations lining up to submit applications?

KB: I think that is more of a question for city staff; I'm not so in-depth, but I would say that a lot of this is the integrated transition to housing plan. I know that city staff are working closely with a number of agencies to do this and some that are working on, specifically on newcomer support, wouldn't be designated as a transitional shelter. So it doesn't affect all of them, but I think it's the ongoing question. We know a lot of this is trying to have the PDCs(?) try to be able to come back to the community. But right now it still feels largely city buildings and trying to figure out city shelter services. But there are certainly local partners who are involved in the conversations, though big builds are not a huge part of the conversation yet.

Kitts: Based on your answer to Councillor Leiper you support shelters all across the city unequivocally, but I think I heard from you there would be a concern for lack of proximity to transit or lack of proximity to community health or resource centres?

KB: Yeah. Just for practical reasons, I think those spots have to be chosen thoughtfully.

3:27

Councillor Theresa Kavanagh: I think we are all on the same page that we really want **affordable housing** (note: Leiper's motion includes: emergency and transitional shelters and transitional supportive housing) and this is not *what* we want, it is what we're pressured to do because of numbers and we need to be flexible. And I think that is what Councillor Leiper's motion is. I am already dealing with this in my own ward and frankly it's been very successful in terms of explaining to people, educating them, and giving them an opportunity to visit the place and talk to them ahead of time. And I am so impressed by the reaction of residents and I just wanted to get your feedback if you have seen these examples before, but in terms of our **transitional housing for families**, it's in Crystal Beach. And it's an outer urban neighbourhood, transit is there. It's not rapid transit but it's there and we've got other things, but it's working. And the neighbourhood has been fantastic; right next to a school.

"I don't know if you've seen other examples like that."

(Our **Note:** main issues raised by citizens that we have received to date have been largely about shelters for singles, problems with drug addiction/drug use and mental health issues and the potential threat to the local community.)

KB: Yeah, actually John Howard did a great bunch of engagement when they had opened a new building. This was years and years ago; wasn't the most rapid housing initiative. They had a BBQ for the neighbourhood, they brought people in, they showed them the services and so I think it's interesting too because families are a bit of an easier demographic to help people get their minds around, whereas when folk who are leaving jail, it's a tougher group to be able to help people see why folks really need housing to get stabilized and supported. So I think that is a good example of really opening up their doors to the community well in advance, having an information session...actually having events where they had folks who were living there and they had community neighbours come in, and it just created a lot of goodwill and it was one well in advance in order to support that direction.

Kavanagh: Before the misinformation gets out there.

KB: Yes.

Kavanagh: Because we certainly had to deal with that as well, for sure.

Plante: Three things and then I have a question at the end. You said in one of your answers that people are dying, we have to do this. I just say that that's true, but the reason people are dying is because they don't want to go to shelter. They want a door, they want privacy, they don't want their stuff to get stolen, they don't want to get woken up in the middle of the night, they may want to use drugs, which they have every single right to, they may do shift work and that just doesn't work for them. So we're sort of getting into the circular argument, which is 'people are dying because they are on the street'. But people are dying on the street because they don't want to go to shelter. So I don't understand why we are scaling something up that people are actually trying to avoid.

"And then I wanted to sort of circle back to the question of proximity to health care and transit and that was really weaponized in the discussion about sprung structures by certain communities to say we can't have these here because we don't have this, that or the other. Something like transit is easily solvable. You just send more buses out to that area. So I would caution using those things as the way to say we can't have those things here because you just get into these circular arguments over and over and over again. And like you said: if they build it, they will come.

"So, my last question for you is do you think that the staff should look at the definition of shelter either before this motion goes to Council or some sort of redefining of what those things are, because I have concerns."

3:31

KB: I don't think in advance of this Council vote, I don't think that's necessarily a must do. I do think revisiting that in general for the definitions would be very helpful, particularly as we are doing the refresh of the 10-year plan. And the official plan, the language there is not clear to me as well, and even 'market housing' and 'affordability' there's some pretty complex differences between things that I think would be helpful for all of us. So I would say not in advance of this motion necessarily, but that's a project that needs to be worked on.

"The other piece, and I appreciate your comments on both the transit element and how that has been weaponized as well as people are voting with their feet; that's why we have encampments and there's also just way more people who are really desperate and falling into homelessness.

"And that's why my response on this motion is very nuanced (laughs). And I do support, and thank you Councillor Kitts for being like, 'Ah, where are you?' We are supportive. We need this. We need to have safe places for people to go and we need safe processes to get people there. However, I really, really encourage you 'to just the forest for the trees' on this. We have got to stop building shelter beds and shelter beds. We just keep pouring money into a hole and as you can see with the AMO Report, a 34% increase in investment and a 32% growth in homelessness. We put the money there and that's what we are going to see. We put the money in housing, we start to turn the ship around. That's the really tough part about this. And it's not easy to make that shift. But that is what I would really encourage folks to do and with this motion, just to keep that big picture perspective on how we move forward.

Chair Councillor Glen Gower: Thanks KB for being there and for her expertise.

3:34

Lo speaks to the two motions he has introduced:

"One excludes the suburban transect from the broad permissions. On the surface I know how this motion seems. But it is actually a lot of the nuances that were mentioned by the previous delegation that raise that concern for me. For example, during sprung structure (discussions) I did speak to not expanding the shelter system and this motion, the overarching motion does do just that. It does expand the shelter system. I think non-congruent settings like group homes, which already exist in many of our suburban communities, are sort of perfect as a way to allow people to live in our communities in a manner that is embedded. It is part of our community and it's sort of a seamless transition.

"The second motion to two specific sites that are in my ward that were considered for sprung structures last year and I just felt that it was appropriate to include those sites as 40 Hearstway was added in (in Leiper's motion) as an exemption for the very same reason given the sensitivities that were raised around it last year in my community.

'Those are my two motions and the reasons I have moved them, I will ask questions later on.'

Troster: Questions to staff. When we were discussing the definition of shelter related to a motion that Councillor Plante had brought a few weeks ago, I had you read out the definition of shelter because it was really quite broad. Councillor Leiper's motion has two terms in it: emergency and transitional shelters. Can someone read me what the definitions are according to the Official Plan? I think in the previous discussion we were just using 'shelter' as a general category while this one breaks it down into two.

3:38

Definition on screen is for rooming houses and group homes. Dated Feb. 5, 2025
"Ottawa Planning Landscape Shelters and related uses"

Staff: "Shelter: means an establishment providing temporary accommodation to individuals who are in immediate need for emergency accommodation and food and may include auxiliary health care, counseling, and social support services."

Troster: (says she does not need definition of residential care facility) I am curious because Councillor Leiper's motion uses emergency shelter and transitional shelter, but in our Official Plan it is just shelter as a general category? Is that correct?

Staff: The official Plan policy uses several terms. They are not terms that are specifically defined terms in the zoning bylaw. We've interpreted the intent of the provisions that refer to emergency shelters to mean shelter in the zoning bylaw. The policies previous to that section concerning emergency accommodation and shelters deal with wide permissions for residential care facilities, group homes, retirement homes. In that way the two sets of policies allow for broad permissions for a continuum of housing to address the needs of people who are in an emergency situation or are transitioning into, hopefully, a more permanent form of accommodation. And in the zoning bylaw, that intermediary step where you are more of a resident and long term occupant of a building is considered a residential care facility and you do get 24/7 social support services there.

"And an emergency shelter is more of an emergency situation. So the intent of the Official Plan policies in speaking to the previous speaker's concerns and the

concerns of councillors and this committee is that we are going to be providing a continuum of housing and through the new zoning bylaw and it is a conformity exercise with the policies in the Official Plan. So at this time I think Councillor Leiper's motions deal specifically from our perspective with shelters: shelter accommodation, the emergency form. However, the reference to transitional shelter is verging into what could be considered more into a residential care facility. And so there is the potential then to expand the motion to also include permissions for residential care facilities. That certainly would be defensible on the basis of the strong policies in the Official Plan that are directive in that respect.

"We are equally to be permitting broad provisions in all urban zones for residential care facilities and that is the next step in the housing continuum in the zoning bylaw framework."

Troster: OK. I'm going to leave it for now but I agree with Councillor Plante that we need to look in a more surgical fashion at these definitions when we're looking at the entire zoning bylaw because I think there is a lot of confusion, but for now I think the language covers us off. I have a question for Community and Social Services staff. I hear the concerns all the time about congregate shelter settings. My understanding that any new overflow shelter that has been opened even in the community centres in the last few months, even if they don't have a key in the door in all cases, residents are able to come and go as they please, they don't have to leave from 9 to 5. Correct?

3:42

Staff: That is correct. We are moving away from traditional emergency shelters to a model that does typically have people leave during the day from the bed area, but everything that we have been moving forward with is that transitional model where people can stay during the day, do job search, that kind of thing.

Troster: At this point does the City have any projects on the books that would be of the emergency 'you can't stay in your room all day' model or are most things under development that offer more autonomy to residents?

Staff: Everything we have in development offers that autonomy. We're transitioning away from the emergency shelter model in general.

Troster: To any department that wants to answer: Do you support what Councillor Lo is trying to do to exclude the suburban transect from Councillor Leiper's motion? Do you see a benefit, or do you agree with the idea of excluding suburbs from the obligation to have shelters in their wards?

Staff: Staff do not have any rationale to support a restriction based on any particular geography. The Official Plan speaks to allowing them in all zones and that's where staff can support the Leiper motion as we move further away from that we don't have a policy context to support that.

Troster: I will speak to this motion to say as one of the two councillors that represent the wards with the highest concentration of social services, shelters, transitional housing, it's really important that we have these services all over the entire city, although not to the same degree as Councillor Plante, I hear about concentration of social services in our neighbourhood. There's only so much we can take, there are only so many buildings that we can renovate....we are renovating office buildings to turn into transitional housing. There's all sorts of things on the go in Somerset Ward. Fundamentally we want people to access services all over the city including in neighborhoods where they come from. I know they are coming from the suburbs to downtown when they need to access shelter. I am relieved to hear there is no plan on the books for expanding the congregate shelter system that are plagued with the problems Councillor Plante speaks about.

"I agree we should be investing as much as possible on permanent housing but I also think we really need to be able to empower staff to respond to an emergency and we are indeed in an emergency. The latest point in time count shows we have 3,000 people in the city that are living in shelters or unsheltered. I will not support Councillor Lo's motion.

3:45

Councillor Laura Dudas: So, for clarification: this would mean for a simple rezoning this avoids going through committee. In the rezoning situation, that would trigger consultation. However, having gone through a situation recently with transitional housing, where it did not require rezoning, I found that city staff were very available and we were still able to work with the community service provider to provide a level of consultation with community that answered quite a lot of their questions and there was a willingness to continue to work with my community to continue that level of collaboration going forward. So. If this motion passes can staff provide a little bit of insight in terms of what level of community engagement would be involved? Would it be simply be no engagement whatsoever, or is there still a level of conversation that happens?

3:46

Staff 2: I can maybe answer from a social services side of things and my planning colleagues can say what it would mean under zoning. We would commit to what we have been doing similar to the site you mentioned, that each of our transitional

housing sites. We do need to respond to the emergency as has been declared by the council. So the level of consultation is really set by what the level of need is for our side of things. But of course we want community's engagement and the intention of shelter is to have people transition into these neighbourhoods in the long term, so we want to make sure that we do engage the community to support those outcomes.

Staff: Think I heard the question assuming this motion is passed and the zoning bylaw amendment goes ahead to permit shelters in all urban zones. There would be consultations through that process. The standard ones XXforXX amendment, with newspaper ads, notification for community associations and the information would be available on the devl aps application.

Dudas: So there is still a level of consultation with the councillor and the community, maybe 'conversation' is a better word. My understanding, and please correct me if I am wrong, is that the zoning bylaw review process was looking at this particular aspect that Councillor Leiper has pulled out of it to accelerate it; that this was going to be coming forward as part of that overall review. Correct?

Staff: Yes that is correct as well as other amendments to implement Official Plan policies to be in conformity with those policies, including broad permission for residential care facilities and eliminating separation distances for group homes.

Dudas: Ok. I am going to be supporting Councillor Leiper's motion. I have many conversations with my community and residents are often surprised that we have various forms of supportive housing, group homes, transitional housing, shelter services in Blackburn Hamlet....Most people, once these facilities come in, and over time they recognize that these are our neighbours and there's a growing level of acceptance and integration. Having these types of settings all across our city is beneficial. It's not just to address the emergency situation we are in, which is absolutely the scenario we are facing. But is it also about having more of a welcoming level for our communities in terms of these individuals, but also to understand that these individuals may not have a home but they are residents of our city, and they deserve the same level of housing and integration and schools and services that anyone else does. So I welcome this motion. I will not be supporting Councillor Lo's. I do appreciate his concerns. I believe they are unfounded.

3:49:30

Councillor Laine Johnson: If I can understand the limitations or implications of the Leiper motion: does this motion move any funding envelopes away from any projects that are currently allocated from the half or other policy priorities?

Johnson: So, would you suggest this is a land use planning motion that changes the land use but doesn't necessarily...I want to know – is it going to walk back the work we've been doing over the last two years to accelerate transitional and affordable housing in this city?

Staff: No it's not. If anything, if new funding opportunities become available that are more specific to this type of transitional housing, this helps us act a little bit more quickly.

Johnson: I wholeheartedly support this motion. I think it is a signal to all of us around the table that we have a shared collective responsibility to respond to the housing and homelessness emergency and crisis that is in our City. Pinecrest Queensway has just been successful in their Heart application, they are going to be welcoming new west end services for people in their community for addiction, homelessness, all sorts of things that would traditionally have been considered a downtown issue. When I was elected I was really pressed upon as an outer urban colleague to understand that we need to be to support people where they live. I have people living in cars, in the Merivale Mall parking lot. I have individuals who are in Bell's Corner and they want to stay near their workplaces, but they don't necessarily have those solutions close at hand and I think there is an obligation to understand that we all deserve to have choice, even if we have limited choices as to where we live.

"I don't believe that this will redirect any of the advancements and the advocacy work done by the non-profit housing sector to try and solve...for the lock and key direction and I am reassured... today it will not undo or redirect any of our policy. But what it does say is that we are all in this together and for that reason, I will not be supporting the Lo motion and i would encourage people to *vehemently reject* it because I think it sends a very bad signal to this table that undoes one of the core elements that Team Ottawa has been for, which is that this is an emergency **and we do not want these types of narratives to be co opted by 'us and them'**. *We have to refuse it. I will not stand for it, so I am very disappointed with it and I am beyond myself.* Thank you. (She is visibly shaken)

3:53:30

Councillor Lo: My main question about the overall motion is that ...– we are already looking at doing something like this with the update zoning bylaw and most of me feels that it is somewhat redundant. It does advance the timeline, but I feel it brings work forward that's being done in the background, well, I guess, actively. *That comes with its own consultation process that's going to come after the second draft?*

Lo: “So, I’m wondering if the motion that’s in front of us here is redundant to the updated zoning bylaw process?”

Staff: Mr. Chair. The councillor is correct, that we are bringing forward the updated zoning bylaw that will implement similar provisions to what is being proposed as well as provisions that will allow other forms of supportive housing like residential care facilities, rooming houses, group homes in all zones. So to the extent that, yes, we are working on it, this is amending our current zoning bylaw, 2008-250 to see it implemented sooner, as I understand it.

Lo: I understand the intent of what’s being brought today. It is just that we have a process that we agreed to follow, I want to say two years ago, and now we’re looking at advancing it despite it already being underway. And...this sort of bypasses that process that I mentioned earlier. There is existing affordable housing, there is existing group homes, and other smaller settings that are already in communities, including mine, and what I’ve heard from my residents is concerns around the broader definition – the fact that it does include every single type. And what I’ve heard was there are concerns about larger congregate settings. They are supportive, and I am supportive of the smaller settings that already exist embedded in our community. The Mathew Houses, the Carty Houses and several, I don’t know if you know what they’re called – but they support people with mental challenges. So that is my main concern with the motion and why I’ve moved my motions forward. I’m not going to be supportive just because it is redundant and I know where everyone else stands, so won’t say anything else.

3:55:30

Plante: Just a quick correction before I get to my questions. You use the term ‘continuum of care’ and I hear this a lot in sort of the shelter circles, the idea that you would go to an emergency shelter and then transitional. So that’s not housing first. Housing first is that you house people right away, the minute their housing become precarious and they don’t have to go through hoops and leaps and jumps and move to several different locations before they have stable housing. It’s like saying, ‘Oh, I’m hungry. And I say, OK, you can have a glass of water for a week, and then you can have a smoothie for two weeks and then maybe we’ll give you some to eat. I just wanted to discourage you from using that language because it’s *absolutely not* what housing first is and what we should be aspiring to, which is obviously housing people in a stable way and not forcing them to go through a bunch of leaps and motions.

Questions for staff. And I want to thank Councillor Johnson for clarifying that none of our supportive housing agreements, or any of the money is – if this would not pass – is jeopardized by this motion, but was there anything – and I did ask this question about the renovation bylaw – was there anything in any of the money we are receiving that says we have to have this motion in place?

Staff 2: No, there is no requirements that we have to have this.

Plante: OK. Is there any willingness among staff, either planning or CCSD (Canadian Council on Social Development) to get a definition of shelter into this motion so we can have a little more clarity on that issue? Is that something people are willing to work on before Council next week?

Staff: At the direction of the committee, we would do that.

3:57:56

Plante: OK. I'm not a member of the committee so I can't vote on this motion but I do want to be the cautionary tale for this kind of stuff because from what I'm hearing, and in my discussions with staff and reading the motion and speaking to Councillor Leiper: first of all, this doesn't solve our problem downtown of emergency shelters. They are all going to stay emergency shelters, which as Kale (Kale Brown, Director of Housing and Homelessness) rightfully pointed out, we have moved to a different model in other parts of the city, but it doesn't solve the problem in the downtown core, which is the shelters are only open at certain times, people will come in and out and there's nothing stable about them.

"And as far as I know there is no requirement in this motion for those shelters to move to a more stable, permanent model of housing either. Is that correct?"

3:58:20

Staff: That is correct. The motion would not affect the operation of existing shelters.

Plante: Obviously that is very concerning because it sounds like the rest of the city would be getting the nice things and then downtown we still have the outdated shelter model and none of that will change and it will just be status quo, which anybody just has to go to the corner of King Edward and Murray St. to know that's not working very well.

"And then the last thing I would say is that while I do agree ostensibly – we are going to be on the same footing across the city with this motion, I think that's very naive and I think we all know that shelters are not going to be going into affluent communities. First of all they can't afford the land; it is more expensive to buy in Westboro, Rockcliffe Park or other parts of the city, and second of all, there's no provision in here to avoid an over concentration of services, which again, let me be the cautionary tale on that front.

“My last question and then I’m done – thank you again to the chair for the time here – was anybody consulted from the shelter services on this motion? Did anybody talk to Shepps, Mission, or Salvation Army?”

Staff 2: No, we wouldn’t typically consult on this just that really it is about where shelters can be located, not as related to your question, related to their actual operations.

3:59:50

Plante: As of note, I had a coffee with Stephen Bartolo of Shepherds of Good Hope and we briefly discussed this motion and he did not seem in favour of it but I can reconfirm that and send it to you guys. Thank you.

Kitts: I was a little bit surprised to see this motion come forward only because this provision will come through the new zoning bylaw update and I believe we are a month out from receiving draft two and will hopefully be voted on before the end of the year. I do understand from Councillor Leiper that staff indicated it would be helpful for this to come forward now and I’m thinking it might be helpful to this committee to hear a little bit more about how it will be helpful and why it should come forward now as a stand alone item instead of waiting for the full update at the end of the year?

4:00:42

Staff 2: It’s a really good question and I think Councillor Johnson made a good reference point, that we are in a housing emergency and as Councillor Plante also mentioned, we’re still operating in two community centres and additional overflow in Councillor Leiper’s ward, and really what we want to do is react quickly when we can and not have additional zoning considerations to go through, which take time, it is a process to respond to that emergency. As we kind of said, we want to give more dignified spaces - that transition housing model. So that allows us to fast track that more dignified space that we are trying to give people.

Gower: I had a couple of questions for staff. Is the housing emergency in effect across the entire City?

Staff 2: Yes. I would certainly say it is across the entire city and as we mentioned across the whole housing continuum, we’re really in crisis be it affordable market, certainly in terms of price we’re certainly at a point where even for middle income it’s becoming increasingly unaffordable and, of course, that’s more acutely felt for lower income individuals.

Gower: In staff's opinion are there any transects that are exempt from the housing emergency in Ottawa?

Staff 2: No.

Gower: And in staff's opinion, are there any wards that are exempt from the housing emergency in Ottawa?

Staff 2: No.

Wrap up.

Leiper: With respect to the question of definition: I've been very clear in the motion that we will have the same definition that is used in the current zoning bylaw.

2009-250 is the current bylaw and in that, shelter means: "an establishment providing temporary accommodation to individuals who are in immediate need of emergency accommodation and food and may include auxiliary health care, counselling and social support services."

"I'm not proposing to change that. I'm trying to keep this motion very contained and so I'm simply using the definition that we use today around this table for shelter. With respect to whether or not this is something new, or whether or not various third party agencies may support the motion or not, I'm not proposing anything new.

"I know I recommended to some of our newly elected councilors when they got elected to read the Official Plan. And I just want to make it clear that the Official Plan says that 'we will permit emergency shelters and transitional shelters as a permitted use in all urban designations and zones'. My motion isn't proposing to do anything different; it's proposing to accelerate it because we're in a housing emergency and 11 months is going to pass before we pass what is going to be what our official plan says we are going to do.

4:03:50

"This isn't something new. I'm proposing to accelerate something we are going to do anyways because our city is in a housing crisis. (A very heavy "ugh!" sigh. Visibly upset).

"This is the official plan. I strongly recommend people read it. I will leave it at that. I hope people can support it. "

Vote called.

The ones with the addresses first;
Greenbank Rd and Woodroffe Ave:
Lo motion: fails 10-1 (Lo for)

2nd Lo: removing suburbs from Leiper motion fails: 10-1 (lo yes)

Leiper Motion passes 10-1 (Lo against)

Jeff Leiper's Motion

5.1

Motion – Councillor J. Leiper – Shelter Use in all Zones

File No.: ACS2025-OCC-CCS-0002 - Citywide

Report Recommendation(s)

That Planning and Housing Committee recommend Council:

1. Direct staff to bring forward a proposed amendment to By-law 2008-250 that would permit **shelter use** in all urban zones, consistent with the proposal in the draft comprehensive zoning by-law and Official Plan, at the earliest opportunity; and,
2. Approve that “shelter” shall have the same definition as that in By-law 2008-250 until such time as that may be amended through a future new comprehensive zoning by-law.
3. Approve that regardless of the modification to By-law 2008-250 effected as a result of this motion, any shelter use at 40 Hearst Way would be required to seek a re-zoning to permit shelter as a use, and that staff provide the necessary zoning language to give effect to this direction.

Motion Moved by Councillor Jeff Leiper:

Whereas the Official Plan in Section 4.2.3 (2) sets as Council policy that:

The City recognizes emergency and transitional shelters and transitional supportive housing as a key component of the housing continuum, which shall, through the Zoning By-law:

- a) Permit emergency shelters and transitional shelters as a permitted use in all urban designations and zones;
- b) Permit emergency shelters and transitional shelters as an accessory or ancillary use to all institutional land uses; and
- c) Not establish restrictions, including minimum separation distances or caps, whose effect is to limit the opportunity to provide such shelter and housing forms.

Whereas the City has proposed in the first draft of the proposed new Comprehensive Zoning Bylaw section 704 in order to ensure zoning consistency with the Official Plan that that (1) "A shelter is permitted in all zones within the Downtown Core, Inner Urban, Outer Urban, and Suburban Transects as shown on schedule A1 -- Transects, other than the EP, -- Environmental Protection, ME -- Mineral Extraction, and IH, Heavy Industrial zones, and are subject to the provisions of the zone in which they are located, and

Whereas the policies in the Official Plan section 4.2.3 recognize "emergency and transitional shelters and transitional supportive housing" as a key component of the housing continuum and require that emergency shelters and transitional shelters in all urban designations and transitional shelters be permitted in all urban designations and zones", and,:

Whereas the City of Ottawa has declared in 2018 a Housing and Homelessness Emergency, and

Whereas it is reasonably foreseeable that federal, provincial or other funding will become available in 2025 to address the housing and homelessness emergency that could include funding for the acquisition of existing housing to be converted to emergency and transitional shelter, in addition to building new such shelters; and,

Whereas some locations where these funds may be used do not currently permit "shelter" used as defined in the Zoning Bylaw 2008-250 and would require a resource -and time-intensive process to complete staff-initiated re-zonings; and,

Whereas amending Bylaw 2008-250 to permit "shelter" use in all urban zones in accordance with Official Plan policies will facilitate a faster response to the current crisis and efficient use of City resources;

Therefore be it resolved that staff be directed to bring forward a propose amendment to Bylaw 2008-250 that would permit shelter use in all urban zones, consistent with the proposal in the draft comprehensive zoning by-law and Official Plan at the earliest opportunity; and,

Be it further resolved that "shelter" shall have the same definition as that in Bylaw 2008-250 until such time as that may be amended through a future new comprehensive zoning bylaw.

Be it further resolved that regardless of the modification to Bylaw 2008-250 effected as a result of this motion, any shelter use at 40 Hearst Way would be required to seek a re-zoning to permit shelter as a use, and that staff provide the necessary zoning language to give effect to this direction.