



December 11, 2001

To: the joint meeting of City of Toronto's Planning and Transportation and Community Services Committees

**Re: Planning staff's proposal for a shelter by-law that would permit the development of shelters**

The YWCA of Greater Toronto is one of the city's largest housing and shelter providers for women. Last year we served over 32,000 individuals in our 4 program areas: Housing and Shelter, Camping & Outdoor Education, Counselling and Group Work, as well as Employment and Skill Development.

We are currently seeing extended stays in all of our emergency and battered women's shelters as a result of both the long term housing crisis and the shortage of emergency beds. We know that a significant proportion – well over 50%-- of those who use our services hail from beyond the geographic bounds of the old City of Toronto. While we are happy to serve all who require shelter and counselling, we believe that an adjustment to the bylaws is necessary to deal adequately with the realities of homelessness in our city. Keeping services in the communities where people need them is one of the basic principles of good social policy. It will also, we believe, free up some of the backlog in emergency shelters, and allow us to begin focussing on long term solutions to the housing crisis.

Yours Sincerely,

Heather McGregor

