



Deputy Mayor
PAUL AINSLIE
CITY OF TORONTO - COUNCILLOR
WARD 24 SCARBOROUGH-GUILDFIELD

100 QUEEN STREET WEST, SUITE C52
COUNCILLORAINSIE@TORONTO.CA
416-392-4008

150 BOROUGH DRIVE, 2ND FLOOR
COUNCILLORAINSIE.CO@TORONTO.CA
416-396-7222

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CHAIR, TORONTO AND REGION CONSERVATION AUTHORITY
NIGHT ECONOMY CHAMPION, CITY OF TORONTO

January 28, 2026

Gord Tanner
General Manager Toronto Shelter & Support Services
Metro Hall, 55 John Street, 6th Floor
Toronto, Ontario, M5V 0C4

Dear Mr. Gord Tanner,

I am writing to request that the City of Toronto open additional shelter spaces, warming centres, and respite sites to expand capacity for our unhoused community members. Current availability across the shelter system and warming centres is insufficient, and increasing these services is urgently needed given the ongoing severe cold weather. Additional warming sites would also help alleviate the persistent overcapacity issues currently being experienced.

I truly appreciate all the work you and your staff are doing to support vulnerable residents during this difficult season. Your ongoing efforts are meaningful and deeply valued by the community. However, given the scale and urgency of the situation, more action is needed to ensure that everyone has access to safe, warm, and dignified spaces.

City Street Needs Assessments show that more than a thousand residents are currently living outdoors—far exceeding the number of available shelter beds and vacant spaces. This disparity highlights the immediate need to increase shelter capacity so that no one is left unsheltered during dangerous weather conditions.

The City of Toronto has a responsibility to ensure that no one is left vulnerable during periods of extreme cold, given the significant health and safety risks involved. Our shelters, warming centres, and respite sites should provide safe, accessible, and dignified environments with essential amenities such as showers, seating, washrooms, food, water, and beds. Whenever possible, we should work to avoid situations where unhoused residents must rely on temporary or overcrowded contingency spaces.

All community members deserve protection and care. No one should be left behind. I know that with strong leadership and continued commitment, the City can take the decisive steps needed to ensure equitable access to basic rights and essential supports during these hazardous conditions.

Thank you for your consideration and for your continued dedication to serving our community.

Sincerely,

Paul W. Ainslie
Deputy Mayor, City of Toronto, Councillor
Ward 24 Scarborough-Guildwood

Copy, Mayor Oliva Chow