

CD.06.FOS (Foster Homes)  
CD.06.GRO (Group Homes)

**DATE:** May 22, 2001

**TO:** Chairman and Members of the Planning and Development Committee

**FROM:** Thomas S. Mokrzycki, Commissioner of Planning and Building

**SUBJECT:** **Foster Homes: A Discussion Paper**  
**MEETING DATE: June 11, 2001**

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**ORIGIN:** Planning and Building Department

**BACKGROUND:** On February 9, 2000, City Council passed the following Resolution 0039-2000:

*"Whereas the issue of appropriate distance separation for foster homes was raised at a resident meeting where concerns were expressed regarding the establishment of a foster home; and  
Whereas appropriate distance separation for the development of foster homes should be reviewed;  
Now therefore be it resolved that staff be directed to prepare a study which addresses appropriate distance separation by which foster homes could be established in the City."*

On April 11, 2001, City Council adopted the following Recommendation GC-0213-2001 of April 4, 2001:

*"That staff be directed to address the protocol for the public notification process, within the corporate report being prepared on the Group Home Policy Review."*

**COMMENTS:**

Presently, foster homes are operated within the definition of "FAMILY" in the zoning by-laws, and are permitted as-of-right in all dwellings in Mississauga.

To address the issue of appropriate distance separation for foster homes, Exhibit 1 examines the existing "GROUP HOME" definition and its provisions in the zoning by-laws, addresses the Provincial regulations related to group homes and foster homes, outlines the distinction between a children's residence (also known as a group home for children) and a foster home in accordance with the Ministry of Community and Social Services guidelines as well as the licencing requirements.

The City does not have a public notification process for group homes. The report also reviews the public notification process for group homes of other municipalities, and provides pros and cons of having a public notification process.

Based on the evaluation of the background information and related regulations, the study provides three strategic options to deal with the issue of foster homes providing care for three (3) to four (4) foster children: Option 1 - status quo; Option 2 - foster homes considered as group homes; and Option 3 - proposed provisions for foster homes. Exhibit 1 is presented as a discussion paper to solicit opinions, generate the identification of issues, and provide information on foster homes. As such, there is no recommendation on any preferred option at this time.

The study also addresses the updated statutory references in the "GROUP HOME" definition in the zoning by-laws and in the Group Home Registration By-law 475-83. Other than for housekeeping purposes, the study does not recommend changes to the existing group home provisions in the zoning by-laws and the Group Home Registration By-law 475-83.

**CONCLUSION:**

A review of the background information and relevant regulations related to group homes and foster homes resulted in providing three strategic options dealing with foster homes providing care for three (3) to four (4) foster children. Prior to finalizing which option the City should pursue, input from the public should be sought, including circulation of the report to various agencies and holding of a public meeting. Subsequent to the holding of this meeting, the matter should be referred back to staff for further consideration and recommendation.

Housekeeping amendments should also be considered to update the statutory references in the "GROUP HOME" definition in the zoning by-laws and in the Group Home Registration By-law 475-83.

**RECOMMENDATION:**

That the report titled "*Foster Homes: A Discussion Paper*" dated May 22, 2001, from the Commissioner of Planning and Building, be circulated to the Ministry of Community of Social Services, relevant Children's Aid Societies, other non-profit organizations and other private services providers dealing with children, existing group home operators in Mississauga and ratepayers associations, for their comments by August 31, 2001.

Original Signed By: \_\_\_\_\_

Thomas S. Mokrzycki

Commissioner of Planning and Building