

January 5, 2023

City of Fredericton Mayor and City Council
cc: cityclerk@fredericton.ca

Dear Mayor Rogers and City Councillors

I am writing in opposition of a new correctional facility in the Vanier Industrial Park.

A zone amendment and variance for a jail is not appropriate. Though the building may be industrial in design, incarceration of people is significantly different from a warehouse, manufacturing, construction operations and a cannabis production facility. The impact of incarcerating people in Fredericton will extend beyond the industrial zone. Some of these impacts fall under City Council's jurisdiction.

At the Planning Advisory Committee (PAC) meeting on December 14th, 2022, the applicant stated that the average stay in provincial jails are 30-33 days. From my experience as a social worker and addictions counsellor, people who go to jail for 30 days or more, lose their housing. At the PAC meeting, the applicant said that the facility wouldn't just open their gates to release prisoners, they would drive them to a home, or to the shelter if they didn't have a home to go to. This facility will increase homelessness in Fredericton and their plan is to drop people off at the shelter. I urge the City Council to consider how this will impact individuals who have lost their homes and Fredericton's Downtown communities who will be seeing more homeless people.

As a counsellor with over 25 years of experience working with mental health and addictions, I've heard many stories of young adults going to jail for the first time after stealing and/or damaging property. In jail, they met older people who would become lifetime friends. They leave jail more unemployable than before but with a new community who help them get their needs met through crime. Experts in criminology say incarceration doesn't work to reduce crime and I've personally witnessed jail being a revolving door for people in poverty with mental health and addictions. This is a municipal concern because people leave jail less resourced and more desperate. A new correctional facility will increase crime in Fredericton.

A correctional facility shouldn't be seen as an industrial building that has no impact beyond its neighbourhood. People go in and out of jail everyday. People come out worse than when they went in. City councillors should be concerned about a facility that damages people, but need to be concerned about the effects the damage has on the City and its residents.

Sincerely,

Valerya Edelman

December 31, 2022

Dear Fredericton City Council,

I am writing on behalf of myself and 12 other physicians that live in the Lincoln Heights neighbourhood of Fredericton, to voice our strong opposition the construction of a jail in such close proximity to our homes.

As physicians we have dedicated our lives to caring for the people in our community. When caring for patients it is important to remember that the best treatment for any ailment is prevention. When we make clinical decisions we must use the best evidence to guide our decision making. Unfortunately, we don't feel that the city of Fredericton is applying either of these principles to the proposal to build this jail.

First of all, there is not a consensus that New Brunswick needs another jail (1) nor is it clear why Fredericton should be the location of this new jail. Secondly, there is not evidence that imprisonment is an effective tool in preventing crime. There is however, evidence to the contrary (2). Investing the 32 million dollars earmarked for the new jail in crime prevention strategies, would be a much better use of those funds.

If a jail is to be built, the current proposed location is an extremely poor choice. Although the proposed location is in an "industrial park", this industrial park is directly adjacent to a large neighbourhood inhabited by countless young families including my own, and that of at least 12 other physicians who also serve this community.

Our sense of safety and security in our homes will be impacted by having a jail nearby. Whether or not the risk of an escaped inmate or any other risk to public safety posed by this jail is statistically likely, I challenge any member of the city council to put themselves in our shoes and ask themselves how they would feel letting their kids play outside in the yard or going for a walk alone at night, a mere 600 meters from a jail.

We love where we live. Lincoln Heights is full of families, kids, and friends. There is a sense of community among those living here. None of us wants to leave. However, if a jail is built within 1 km of our homes some of us will inevitably move away from this community. Some may leave the city altogether. In our case, this would mean doctors leaving. This isn't a threat. This is a reality.

Physician recruitment and retention in New Brunswick has been a major issue in the recent past. Roughly 70,000 patients are without a primary care physician in this province (3) with Fredericton being disproportionately affected. Building this jail will cause people to leave, and that could mean doctors will leave.

The city has been met with a virtually unanimous, collective rejection of this proposal by the community that will be most affected. The Planning and Advisory Committee has voted to reject the proposal to rezone the land for this jail. The community has given a clear answer about this proposed jail. The answer is no.

The undersigned group of physicians have been working and living as part of this community for years and hope to do so for years to come. As residents of Lincoln Heights and physicians caring for this community we hope that our opinions on this matter are taken into consideration. This Province and in particular, the city of Fredericton, can't afford to lose more doctors. We vehemently oppose construction of this jail.


Sincerely,

Dr. Charles A B Smith MD, FRCPC

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to be 'Charles A B Smith', written over a horizontal line.

December 31, 2022

Dr. Maryse Tadros MD



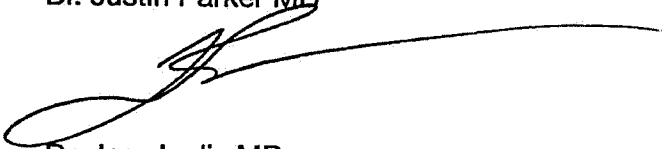
Dr. Adam Vayani MD



Dr. Mohammed Khaleduzzaman MD



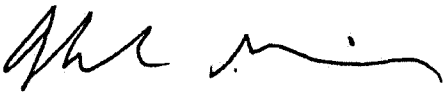
Dr. Justin Parker MD



Dr. Jess Inglis MD



Dr. Kyle Gillis MD



Dr. Brittany Gillis MD



Dr. Muhammad Saleem Raza MD



M. S. Raza

Dr. MUHAMMAD SHAFIQ



Dr. Peter K. Fraser



Dr. Tim Snell



Dr. Irene Thudch



References:

1. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/fredericton-lail-data-records-1.6636550>
2. Gendreau, P. Goggin, C., & Cullen, F. T. (1999). The Effects of Prison Sentences on Recidivism. Ottawa: Solicitor General Canada.
3. <https://www.cbc.ca/news/canada/new-brunswick/health-fitch-primary-care-1.6624759>