



ONTARIO COALITION AGAINST POVERTY

157 Carlton St, Unit 201, Toronto, ON. M5A 2K3
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I am an organizer with the Ontario Coalition Against Poverty. For years, we have fought for the City to purchase or expropriate 214-230 Sherbourne Street, the seven properties located steps from the southwest corner of Dundas and Sherbourne and build rent-geared-to-income housing in its place. As other deputants will no doubt describe, the neighbourhood in a state of crisis caused by Toronto's deadly housing crisis, shelter shortage, and deepening poverty.

In July of this year, we put forward a vision for housing at that site in collaboration with the Open Architecture Collaborative and others working in the field. We showed how the City could build between 150 to over 260 units of publicly owned rent-geared-to-income housing that could transform Dundas and Sherbourne into a vibrant community. The area desperately needs this form of housing.

Of course, we are not alone in seeking to transform the neighbourhood. Toronto's upscale developers have their own vision for the area and they are pursuing it aggressively. You can see it manifested in the condo towers that are encroaching on the neighbourhood from all directions. There is a fundamental difference between the two visions, theirs seeks to change Dundas and Sherbourne by building homes for the wealthy in an area populated by poor, working class and homeless people. Ours seeks to build homes for the area's poor, working class and homeless people. Their vision will displace the people who have called the neighbourhood home for generations, whereas ours will transform the area by including them.

The City has a choice to make, you can either allow the developers to continue their reckless pursuit of profit or you defend the poor and homeless residents of Dundas and Sherbourne. Not doing anything or simply delaying is a de facto vote for the status quo which is seeing housing options for poor people being obliterated and is wrecking their lives.

It is heartening to see that the report from the Executive Director of the Housing Secretariat is recommending that the City to come up with a plan to acquire 214-230 Sherbourne Street. But as



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we all know, without a funding source attached to the project, the plan will go nowhere. So we are asking that you secure the funds necessary to either purchase or expropriate these properties through the upcoming budget process. Further, while tying the acquisition of the properties to completing the repairs to the Dan Harrison buildings is a good idea, you must ensure there is no loss of social housing through the process of this revitalization. We understand that the City can't build housing on the scale necessary alone, and we will fight alongside you to force the provincial and federal governments to be involved. But the City does have the resources to acquire the properties in question.

So I ask you today to make the choice to not delay any further, secure the funds to acquire 214-230 Sherbourne Street, and defend poor and homeless people in this City. 27 organizations from across the City sent you a letter last June to do so, and now over 150 academics, architects, and planners are asking you to do the same. The time is now, thank you.

Yogi Acharya

Organizer, Ontario Coalition Against Poverty