

**Deputation to Economic and Community Development Committee  
Re: motion EC.18.12 regarding community spaces in the  
Oakwood Vaughan neighbourhood  
Submitted by: Oakwood Vaughan Community Organization (OVCO)**

**December 7, 2020**

The Oakwood Vaughan community has been engaged in securing space for community use with a particular focus on youth for the past four years. At the Oakwood Vaughan Neighbourhood Action Partnership (OV NAP)'s first community dinner and forum in November 2016, residents clearly expressed their need for a community space and roundly rejected the potential sale of the former Vaughan Road Academy.

Both OV NAP and the Oakwood Vaughan Community Organization (OVCO) followed the evolution of Councillor Matlow's motion with great interest. OVCO in particular, launched its position paper on [community safety](#) at a [community dinner](#), March 9, 2020, recognizing youth space and services as an important strategy in the prevention of youth violence.

Building a community support base for youth in Oakwood Vaughan is critical. We have been working with all partners, to advocate collaboration between the City, the TDSB and the community to make this happen. There has been progress, and that progress needs to continue.

The City needs to continue to discuss the potential use of surplus space in the former Vaughan Road Academy (VRA) with the TDSB and the Toronto Lands Corporation. OVCO is still committed to work on solutions to facilitate this process. OVCO anticipates being in a position to offer a sublet for the youth programs in the new year in the former Vaughn Road Academy Building. In addition, OVCO has a plan to make this VRA space accessible, which is supported by the TDSB. It will be important to understand how youth and related youth services can access space in the former VRA even when there is not an operating school active on the site. While OV NAP and OVCO have been working towards the utilization of this space, Councillor Matlow's motion brings it closer to reality.

It is very encouraging that we can look forward, with Council approval, to the first year of the pilot in 2021. We encourage that approval and ask that Council consider a multi-year pilot to account for challenges in youth using the space in 2021 due to pandemic restrictions

We are further encouraged that "the Chief Financial Officer and Treasurer has reviewed this report and agrees with the financial implications as identified in the Financial Impact section."

We request that Council approve this staff report and begin its implementation and OVCO looks forward to future partnerships to ensure that youth continue to have access to services, supports and space within the OV community.

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today.

**Bill Worrell, Chair**

**OVCO**