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July 10th, 2020

Planning & Housing Committee
City of Toronto
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, ON M5H 2N2

RE : PA15.2 - Creating New Non-Profit Co-operative Homes at 685 Queen Street East

Chair & Members of the Planning & Housing Committee,

First, our **HousingNowTO.com** volunteers would like to commend Riverdale Co-operative (a non-profit corporation) for partnering with Streetcar Developments to grow their available Affordable-Housing unit count on an existing Riverdale Co-operative location which is located near both the Queen and King Street streetcar lines – and the future Broadview TTC extension to the East Harbour site on the old Unilever lands.

This smart, transit-oriented development of new Affordable-Housing capacity, in an existing Toronto neighbourhood – and is an excellent use of the proposed \$4.8-Million in Section-37 funds, and as such it has our full-support.

However, as with many other sites from the City's "Open Doors" program, we see the same recurring problem on the City side of the table – that the number of Affordable-Housing units proposed in the initial "Open Doors" approvals by City Council gets cut-down by during the negotiation and approval process with the City Planning department. This fundamentally flawed practice needs to be called-out – and City Planning staff need to be instructed that it has to end.

Just over a year ago on June 18, 2019, City Council approved item [PH6.4 - Providing New Affordable Rental Housing at 685 Queen Street East](#) – which proposed ***“to revitalize the existing nine units and add up to 23 additional, accessible affordable rental units. Through the development review process and community consultation, an appropriate built form will be reached, which will ultimately determine the final number of affordable units.”***

That plan would have delivered a total of Thirty-Two (32) new & renewed Affordable-Housing. Today's proposal for the same site, now proposes – ***“the renovation of nine units in the existing heritage structure, plus an addition of 17 units at the rear of the building, for a total of 26 units.”***

Somehow during the City Planning process to define the “appropriate built form” it was apparently deemed appropriate to cut Six (6) new Affordable-Housing units out of this project – a loss of 20% of the total Affordable-Housing units that City Council approved for this site in June 2019. The reason for this loss of Riverdale Co-operative units is unclear from the materials we have found on-line, but it may be related to the [Heritage designation](#) that was applied to 685 Queen Street East by Council in March 2016.

Our **HousingNowTO.com** volunteers are going back and adding every year of the “Open Doors” program into our free, public, interactive map – and we see this pattern repeating over-and-over where Council approves a new or expanded Affordable-Housing site for a reasonable number of units, which is then cut by a significant number during the City planning consultation process. This example at 685 Queen Street East is Six (6) units – but at other sites in Scarborough and Etobicoke we see the loss of dozens of units from a single-project.

Council has almost unanimously agreed that Toronto is in a “Housing-Crisis” and that “Affordable-Housing is the City’s #1 Priority” – perhaps it is time that the City Planning department and all its sub-sections is clearly instructed by Council to ensure that the creation of new Affordable-Housing units at speed and at scale takes priority over the other “*appropriate built form*” considerations that apparently removed 20% of the units from this “Open Doors” site at 685 Queen Street East...?

We encourage the P & H committee to not delay the approval of this 685 Queen Street East for Riverdale Co-operative and Streetcar Developments – and approve the proposal “as is”, while at the same time asking for a full transparent-accounting of the site-specific unit-loss that occurred over the last thirteen-months within City Hall.

Yours,



Mark J. Richardson
Technical Lead – HousingNowTO.com
CC – Mayor Tory, Councillor Fletcher

