



Rockcliffe-Smythe Community Association

rscaccontact@gmail.com

July 13, 2016

Dear Toronto Councillors and Mayor,

On behalf of the Rockcliffe-Smythe Community Association, I wish to convey our request that the City consider better options for a 100-bed emergency men's shelter than 731 Runnymede Rd., and vote against this hastily-conceived and inadvisable proposal.

We have other ideas for this type of service, space and municipal investment in our area.

While our residents have asked for better services here, in our current community survey, we have learned that most respondents to date are seeking a hub model for City investment in our neglected community, providing a variety of needed services and new programs for all residents.

This hub model, an attractive option for 731 Runnymede, would only allow for a very limited number of beds, more in line with our community needs and capacities., such as 10 beds. This human-scale, integrated and community-based model would be ideally suited to our diverse and many needs, while addressing community concerns about such issues as:

1. safety for the clients, drivers, cyclists, pedestrians and those who will invariably cross Runnymede on a busy underpass ramp to access the covered Walmart parking garage and railway yard and tracks entrance,
2. safety and security of local residents and families using this busy sidewalk, Walmart parking, parks and alley and nervous about women's, children's, shoppers' and local park safety, public vagrancy and crime,
3. cost-effectiveness of provision of extensive services to a high-needs population already being served in specialized downtown facilities, hospitals, agencies and programs, and actual feasibility of moving these specialized services
4. logic of extensively renovating a rental property when the City owns unused or closing properties including police and school facilities, already agreeing to pay the owners 25 percent more than the rent previously charged Goodwill a few months ago, despite being un-leased during this time,
5. logic of placing one-sixth of the evicted downtown George Street homeless beds to only one of Toronto's 130 neighbourhoods - located in a remote, quiet northwest suburb, an area not actually requiring them for residents who are already not receiving adequate services for their many needs..
6. our urgent, longstanding and considered priority to address our residents' own desperate need for City investment in neighbourhood improvement and targetted services required by existing residents, as determined by citizen engagement that has not yet happened and evidence-based decision-making that has not been applied.

Thank you for withholding approval of a plan that has not received community input, planning due diligence or financial scrutiny, and reflects these shortcomings in its numerous problematic assumptions, dated, missing or incorrect facts, and unsubstantiated conclusions and recommendations.

Best regards,

Miriam Hawkins
Co-Chair, Acting President
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