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Parkdale Community – Vision for 11 Brock Development Opportunity

The lack of affordable housing is an issue that both defines the Parkdale community and unites its community members. 11 Brock presents a unique opportunity to develop affordable housing on city-owned land in Parkdale. The site has been acquired by the City of Toronto for the development of affordable housing. Parkdale Neighborhood Land Trust (PNLT) recently facilitated a community visioning activity in order to develop recommendations that could be considered in the eventual development of the site. PNLT brought together leaders in the Parkdale community, focusing on the need for affordable housing for seniors, supported groups and families, to discuss the current situation and how to guide future development to best address community need in Parkdale. These priorities were identified in a community needs assessment in the Parkdale Community Planning Study (2016).

The following is a summary of the recommendations and comments arising out of the community visioning activity, with more fulsome summaries available in Appendix A (attached).

Background and Context

PNLT invited members of the Parkdale community to participate in a visioning event addressing the development opportunity at the 11 Brock site on February 9, 2017. The event was attended by more than 100 people, with representatives from the community (both homeowners and renters) and non-profit organizations. Presentations were made by community members who have used/relied on affordable family housing, supportive housing and senior housing to provide context around what these housing types provide. Following the presentations, small group discussions were held focusing specifically on the 11 Brock development opportunity and specific issues that may guide what the development looks like and how it may proceed, including level of affordability, ownership structure, community engagement, tenant support services, other uses and facilities, design, and developer evaluation criteria.

The stated goal for the visioning event was:

- To engage community in visioning activity that is specifically framed around "community needs" as defined by the recent Parkdale Plan.
- To build consensus in the community around progressive definitions of affordable housing that are appropriate to the needs of residents in Parkdale
- To provide the public and local municipal staff with a written vision statement and recommendations for the 11 Brock development opportunity.

Community Vision

Parkdale has a real and immediate need for new affordable housing in the community. The development opportunity at 11 Brock should focus on providing one or more of three community housing priorities including: new supportive, family and or senior housing. Furthermore, this development should avoid exclusive-uses, reflecting the diverse needs of the community and encourage community development by introducing affordable housing and new community space for non-profit agencies and social connection. The design and operation of this site should align with the Parkdale community values of affordability, diversity, inclusion and equity. Support services, provided through the development and encouraged through community agency partnership, are critical to the success of the

development and should be prioritized. The development must prioritize community engagement and partnership, reflected in development evaluation criteria. Increasing density must be considered in order to maximize the opportunity to address the significant need in the community.

Recommendations for Development

The following recommendations should be considered by the City in the development of the Request for Proposals for 11 Brock and the evaluation of the development/developer applications.

1. Affordability should be defined through Rent-Geared to Income (RGI) and income target levels should reflect current neighborhood population.
2. Affordability requirements should be a long term (preferably in perpetuity) legally binding obligation for the operator/owner of the development.
3. Affordability and rent options should reflect a range (very low, low, mid and market) to ensure a diverse and reflective community.
4. Tenant application/selection should be transparent, accessible and available onsite.
5. The development should prioritize a formal role for non-profit/community ownership structures (either through co-op models or limited equity options or through a formal role for NPO's to lead in ownership or operations).
6. Developer and development evaluation criteria should prioritize innovation and partnership with community organizations.
7. Formal and real community engagement should be a priority in development evaluation criteria.
8. Community engagement must occur throughout the development process and early community engagement with a clear and real opportunity to impact development and design is a priority
9. Community engagement activities must engage residents, business owners and community service providers and address barriers to participation, including language, literacy and apathy. There must be a clear link between engagement and results in order to ensure authentic engagement activities.
10. Design of the site should prioritize environmental and sustainability characteristics to offset the costs of living through rising utility costs.
11. The development should maximize the site for housing, including by requiring below-grade parking and should include green space frontage.
12. Tenant support services are critical to the success of the development and should be broad and flexible to accommodate various tenant needs. Support services should partner with local community agencies to ensure continuity and consistency of care.
13. The development should include space for other uses, including affordable child care and social enterprises, community workspace and local business space.