

Mayor Tory
CC: Mark Grimes, Mary- Anne Bedard

We are writing to you to strongly **oppose** the locations at 2950 & 2970 Lake Shore Boulevard West, at the main Commercial intersection in New Toronto, for use as a shelter. We do not dispute the need for shelter beds in Ward 3, anywhere else in Etobicoke, or the City of Toronto, and recognize the need to support the marginalized and vulnerable populations in our City especially during the pandemic. However, we are united with the overwhelming community opposition to a shelter in the heart of New Toronto's small commercial strip, as are close to 2,000 residents and business owners in this community who have signed a petition opposing the shelter proposal at this location. The rationale for our opposition is as follows:

- **Waste of Tax Payers Dollars:** We are outraged that, through the Freedom of Information Act, it has been discovered that the City is proposing to purchase the property at almost 3 times the fair market value- \$13,844,169.00, a significant premium and not including **significant additional costs** to renovate these derelict commercial spaces to accommodate human habitation. In 2017, 2970 Lake Shore Blvd. West sold for \$4.0M and in 2020 the combined assessed value of the two buildings is \$5.3M. **How can City Council justify paying two to 3 times fair market value on top of paying a premium for commercial buildings at a main commercial intersection, when so many better commercial and residential sites are available at a fraction of the cost?**
- **Fiscally Irresponsible:** Paying a premium to locate a shelter at **New Toronto's only main commercial intersection is fiscally irresponsible**, will **cripple local businesses** - who were already struggling pre-COVID-19, remove much needed long term commercial space from New Toronto's small commercial area, and remove jobs and local shopping opportunities. New Toronto's commercial area needs to be revitalized - not to have its only main commercial intersection be turned into a shelter.
- **Creating Segregation not Integration:** At three times the City's average density of Social Housing and Rent Geared to Income units, New Toronto already shoulders **15.4% density per capita – three times the density of Mimico, eight times the density of Longbranch and fifteen times the density of Alderwood the other neighborhoods in Ward 3**. The City shelter plan calls for smaller shelters integrated into the community. **We fail to see how a 100 -bed shelter on a main commercial intersection is "small" or "integrated"**.
- **Significant Impact to Safety:** The proposed location is near **8 schools and daycare centers** and a mere block from 7th Street Junior School. Layering another shelter on top of the **four existing shelters** in our community will significantly impact resident's safety and security. New Toronto is already fraught with safety and security issues having just experienced a shocking 80 bullet shoot out a few yards from proposed shelter location, as well as numerous shooting and stabbing incidents over the past few months.
- **Lack of Transparency:** **Our neighbourhood was blindsided when we learned the City ignored the current owner's proposal** to tear down the buildings and construct two floors of commercial/retail space and 95 much needed rental units – two thirds of which would have been suites and 1 bedroom units. This could have been a win-win proposal revitalizing New Toronto's main commercial intersection, bringing jobs to the neighborhood, and providing much needed affordable rental apartments, and it met with an engaged community response.
- **Redirect the Shelter Funding to support Affordable Housing:** While emergency responses to homelessness are critical to provide a crisis response in the short-term, **redirecting the proposed \$13.8M+ towards acquisition of permanent housing would align with the forward -looking strategy presented by the Housing and Planning Committee and provide long term solutions to end homelessness**. On September 22 2020, the Planning and Housing Committee unanimously carried a motion to direct the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat and the General Manager, SSHA to report to the October 20, 2020 meeting of the Planning and Housing Committee on a plan to **shift future capital and operating funding from shelters to create permanent supportive housing**. Therefore, **it defies the motion** to open a new shelter **slated for completion in 2022** in this location- **just to say the City executed an outdated plan set in 2018 for 1,000 shelter beds!!!** We urge you to **immediately redirect investment away from building a shelter in this location and invest these resources towards building affordable housing**.

We have elected **you** to act on behalf of **all residents** and you need to take responsibility for the actions which have been taken to date. A homeless strategy that overlooks community engagement, does not address health and safety of the persons it claims to serve and puts the safety and health of thousands of people at risk is not an effective plan. It is time to pause and stop the reckless decision making without consequence. The current solution that the City has in place is a band-aid plan that isn't sustainable as it fails to recognize the concerns and risks for both shelter clients and the residents/business owners where shelters are placed.

As residents and business owners of the New Toronto neighbourhood, we are **strongly opposed** to the City purchasing 2950 & 2970 Lake Shore Boulevard West and building a 100+ bed shelter on our main commercial intersection. **We urge that you reject the closing of the purchase of 2950/2970 Lake Shore Boulevard West for use as a shelter, and authorize City Staff to redirect the \$13.8M earmarked for this purchase to support the Policy and Recommendations of the Housing TO Action Plan, using those funds to create affordable housing in communities across the City.**

Sincerely,

NEW TORONTO RATEPAYERS ASSOCIATION