

Submission from Vashti King including petition



To the Planning and Housing Committee
Cc Mayor Tory, Councillor Grimes, Mary-Anne Bédard and Barnes Management Group

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

- **Misuse of Tax Payers Dollars:** Through the Freedom of Information Act, it has been discovered that the City is proposing to purchase the property for \$13,844,169.00. This does not include **significant additional investment** to renovate these derelict 1950 commercial spaces (likely filled with asbestos and outdated wiring) to accommodate human habitation. **How can the City justify paying two to 3 times fair market value on top of paying a premium for commercial buildings at a main commercial intersection for temporary shelter housing, which costs the City at least twice as much to operate than affordable permanent housing?**
- **Outdated Strategy:** Opening a new shelter or co-locating a shelter slated for completion in 2022, is **outdated thinking**. On September 30 2020, City Council adopted the Planning and Housing Committee motion to **shift future capital and operating funding from shelters to create permanent supportive housing**. At best, shelters are a Band Aid solution to homelessness. Affordable housing provides a durable, long lasting solution to homelessness at a lower cost per person which allows more clients to be helped. **We are encouraged to hear that the purchase of 2950/2970 Lakeshore Boulevard West is being considered in this acquisition strategy for affordable housing.**
- **Paying a premium to locate a shelter at New Toronto's only main commercial intersection is fiscally irresponsible.** It will cripple local businesses already struggling pre-COVID-19, removing much needed space from New Toronto's small commercial area, impacting jobs and local shopping opportunities. New Toronto's commercial area needs to be revitalized - not to have its **only main commercial intersection** turned into a shelter.
- **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 **overwhelming positive community response**.
- **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 of Toronto 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 to the community and shelter clients:** **The proposed location is near 8 schools and daycare centers** and a mere block from 7th Street Junior School and will significantly impact resident's safety and security in an already safety challenged neighbourhood. **Shelter Services Checklists** do not include a scan of any other provincially supported shelters and programs for women and children already well established in New Toronto. **Locating or co-locating a shelter in this location to serve a transient male population** would be a **direct safety and privacy concern** with the Women's Habitat Intake facility for women escaping violence and abuse, located just 96 metres away and sharing a back alley with the proposed site, as would **locating or co-locating a women's only shelter on a main commercial intersection**.
- **Oversaturated Resources:** Layering a **massive 100 bed shelter** serving a transient population on top of the **four existing shelters** in our community will **overburden existing supportive social resources**. By using this site for affordable housing, it would provide a **transition for existing shelter clients** already in the community, **helping to free up the existing shelter beds** desperately needed for new clients. Integrating a **commercial aspect on the main floor** to provide much needed **job opportunities or supportive services** for these residents would provide **better integration** with the main commercial intersection and **support residents to live successfully in the community**.
- **100% Support for Affordable Housing:** Emergency shelters are **providing unintended permanent housing** for far too many people. People need to be **moved out of the shelter system and into affordable or supportive housing**. While emergency responses to homelessness are critical to provide a crisis response in the short-term, with temporary shelters, **redirecting the proposed \$13.8M+ towards acquisition of permanent housing would contribute to the long-term solution to end homelessness and create a much better return on this staggering investment both to people that are homeless and to the community of New Toronto.**

We are **strongly opposed** to the City purchasing **2950 & 2970 Lake Shore Boulevard West** and **locating or co-locating a shelter on that site**. We urge the city to find a more appropriate and less expensive site to locate a shelter in Ward 3 **than the main commercial intersection of New Toronto's very small commercial area**. If the city closes on the purchase of the buildings, we urge the City to retain commercial space on the ground floor for social services offices/daycare/training/job opportunities and construct **permanent affordable housing** on the upper floors that may contribute to a **long term, durable, sustainable, community integrated and lasting solution to homelessness in the City of Toronto**.

Sincerely,
New Toronto Ratepayers Association

August 2020
New Toronto Ratepayers Association
newtorontorpa@gmail.com

**Petition to Mayor John Tory, Councillor Mark Grimes, Chris Korwin-Kuczynski
and Mary-Anne Bedard**

**Oppose Proposed Shelter Location for 2950 & 2970 Lake Shore Blvd. West,
Etobicoke, ON**

We are a group of deeply concerned residents in New Toronto who oppose the City Council proposal to open a shelter at the location of **2950 & 2970 Lake Shore Boulevard West**.

While we recognize the need for more shelters in our City to assist vulnerable residents and also recognize that COVID-19 has increased that need, New Toronto is already supporting MORE THAN its fair share of social services. Our concerns are outlined below:

1. New Toronto already houses **14 social service programs** in a **3.2 square kilometre area**. The proposed shelter will require even more social services to be layered into our community.
2. The proposed shelter will negatively impact New Toronto community safety (close proximity of shelter to **eight schools and daycare centres**).
3. The proposed location will negatively impact Lake Shore Boulevard West revitalization and our businesses who have made New Toronto their 'home'.

Please **PRINT YOUR NAME** and **SIGN** the petition below to oppose the proposed shelter location at 2950 & 2970 Lake Shore Blvd. West, Etobicoke, ON.

FIRST NAME (print)

LAST NAME (print)

SIGNATURE

**Petition containing approximately 1675 signatures
is on file in the City Clerk's Office**



Recipient: Mayor John Tory, Councillor Mark Grimes, Mary-Anne Bedard, Chris Korwin-Kuczynski

Letter: Greetings,

Oppose Proposed Shelter Location for 2950 & 2970 Lake Shore Blvd.
West, Etobicoke, ON