

LAMP Community Health Centre



"Building a Healthy Community"

October 19, 2020

Planning and Housing Committee
Chair Councillor Ana Bailão

Toronto City Council
100 Queen Street West Toronto, ON M5H 2N2
RE : 17.3. – Taking Action to Increase Affordable and Supportive Housing Opportunities

Attention: Chair Councillor Ana Bailão & Members of the Housing and Planning Committee

LAMP Community Health Centre has a proud and long standing 40-year history of serving our community in South Etobicoke. As a health service provider working with vulnerable populations, we know that access to shelter, housing, food, employment, and other social factors are critical determinants of overall health and wellbeing. With this in mind, LAMP is supportive of the City of Toronto's plan to create an emergency shelter with the possibility of additional affordable housing units in South Etobicoke to respond to the increasing issue of homelessness.

We ask the City to consider the following:

- The absence of a shelter that offers safe, supportive and accessible services with dignity for men, women, and families is a significant gap in South Etobicoke. There is a visible homelessness issue in this community that will continue to grow as people find it increasingly difficult to afford housing. At present, those who are homeless and in need of shelter must travel quite a distance to access shelter services, often only to find that the other City shelters are full. This can be a matter of life and death for some, especially during the winter months.
- The global COVID-19 pandemic has highlighted and amplified the disproportionate challenges vulnerable people in our communities face as they struggle to survive. The displacement of community members from their homes related to evictions, gentrification, mental health challenges, and poverty is on the rise. There has also been an increase in seniors facing homelessness, with a recent example being two senior women who lived in South Etobicoke all their lives having to move into shelters outside the city, leaving them feeling isolated.
- The creation of a shelter requires the inclusion of adequate wrap-around and social supports for users that contribute to positive health outcomes; effective partnerships, including the selection of a shelter operator, that will ensure the implementation of a model based on leading practices in safety and operational standards; and a model of care that takes into account the needs of those accessing services.
- We advocate for and support a comprehensive community engagement and consultation process to guide the creation of a shelter and permanent affordable housing that aligns with leading practices in shelter and affordable housing administration.

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We understand that there are strong opinions on all sides of this issue. LAMP respects all of these perspectives and the richness they add to the conversation. As a mainstay in this community, we are most impressed with the strong dedication and commitment that everyone has to this neighbourhood, and we share in that commitment. We have always supported community engagement as a key part of the process, and we continue to encourage constructive dialogue as the City of Toronto works with the community throughout this planning process.

We look forward to continued opportunities for engagement and consultation between the City of Toronto and the broader community. LAMP is ready and willing to work alongside our community to contribute in any way we can to supporting community health and wellbeing. After all, we are stronger together.

Thank you for your consideration.

Kind regards,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Keddone Dias', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Keddone Dias
Executive Director
LAMP Community Health Centre