

Dear Councillor Filion,

RE: Modular Supportive Housing Proposal at 175 Cummer Avenue by the City of Toronto

For over 40 years, the Bayview Cummer Neighbourhood Association (BCNA) has served the interests of its 1800 households to ensure the tranquility and quality of our neighbourhood. For over 40 years, many of our neighbours have voluntarily served on the BCNA to promote, foster, and protect the public, social, cultural, and recreational interests of the residents of our community.

We are writing to you today to express the concerns and overwhelming objection that the members and residents that we serve have regarding the lack of community consultations for the Modular Supportive Housing that is being proposed at 175 Cummer Ave. by the City of Toronto.

The concerns and objections were shared with us during an oversubscribed Zoom meeting we organized on March 5, 2021 to hear from our members and community residents. These concerns and objections were also witnessed firsthand by a representative from your office who attended our Zoom meeting. We continued to hear the same concerns and objections via the many emails and phone calls we received over the course of the weekend.

Many specific issues have been raised but overall, residents are very concerned about the rapid acceleration of this proposed project which has not included any meaningful neighbourhood consultations and will have to resort to the use a Ministerial Zoning Order to expedite the development. The residents and community have many unanswered questions and the lack of transparency in the process has eroded their public confidence and trust. Although a Community Engagement Meeting is scheduled for March 9, 2021 by the City of Toronto, the community is requesting that a proper public forum be held where they can have their questions properly answered, addressed, and have their trust reinstated before any next steps are taken with this project. Unfortunately, given the manner in which this project has been presented to the community, there is no trust that the March 9th meeting will suffice to address the concerns and questions which have been raised.

Our neighbourhood is well established, with many residents having resided here for decades. These taxpaying residents expect to be informed and consulted well in advance regarding any new projects and significant changes to their community, including those being proposed by the City of Toronto.

Our catchment includes Cummer Lodge and Willowdale Manor. A petition has been signed by over 200 vulnerable senior residents living at Willowdale Manor who have become terrified and alarmed because of the many unknown issues arising from this proposed modular housing development. This project will deprive these seniors of their greenspace in the twilight years of

their lives. What is the City of Toronto prepared to provide the community with, in exchange for this loss in greenspace?

We are committed to representing all our residents and protecting their safety and security; this includes our seniors, our children and our grandchildren, as well as students at nearby Cummer Valley Middle School, Avondale Alternative Secondary School, St. Joseph's Morrow Park Catholic Secondary School, Brebeuf College School and St. Agnes Catholic School. Moreover, we represent the concerns raised by visually impaired and blind individuals who live in our catchment area as well.

"YES, IN MY BACKYARD" WITHOUT SACRIFICING NEIGHBOURHOOD SECURITY: We are alarmed that many voices of our neighbourhood will be disregarded as being "NIMBY" when that is not the case --- we have welcomed families in affordable housing projects on Cummer and Yonge, the Welcome Center on Yonge, St. Clare's Residence on Bayview and the townhomes south on Willowdale. During this time of crisis and a shortage of affordable housing, we understand that providing more housing is important to the City of Toronto. However, we strongly believe that the tenants approved for 175 Cummer Avenue should be seniors who would benefit from the surrounding supportive infrastructure already in place. It is very unfortunate that the housing being provided is only meant for single occupancy, as in a family neighbourhood this would have been a good opportunity to have housing available for other vulnerable categories such as pregnant mothers with children.

Our members and residents have also questioned the location chosen by the City and if the City is truly setting up the future tenants of 175 Cummer Ave. for success or is the City setting them up for failure? As we all know, success needs to be measured not only by putting a roof over someone's head and food on their table. We know that in order to build a new life, these tenants will need a new meaning in their life which requires proximity to day-to-day amenities and supports. It is important to note that there is no walkable grocery store or proximity to reasonably priced necessities and groceries at 175 Cummer Ave. There is no community center with amenities, or libraries in the area that would support the tenants in helping them to succeed as they exit homelessness.

The BCNA's membership includes many volunteers and professionals who are involved with assisting those who are exiting homelessness, and the homeless. These individuals could have provided constructive advice that would have been of great assistance to the City of Toronto regarding the issues related to location, transportation and the avoidance of high cost of living areas. As mentioned earlier, consultation with the professional level of many of our members and residents would serve those exiting homelessness in so many better ways.

As an association, we question how the City of Toronto plans to track and measure the success of these modular homes? We would like to see the City of Toronto put in place, not perceptions of success, but actual data collected and statistical information that shows that these homes work without having a negative impact on the community.

As an association, we would also like to take an active role on the Community Liaison Committee that will be created for this project along with one to two members from our catchment.

We recognize that we must look after those that can not look after themselves. However, without the City of Toronto prepared to organize a constructive and inclusive consultation process whereby the views of our community are heard, and our questions answered, our members and residents are strongly against this housing project.

Thank you.

Sincerely,

Bayview Cummer Neighbourhood Association

Cristina Martins, President
Margaret Yu, Vice President
Matti Prima, Vice President
Shalini Sethi, Treasurer
Diane McKenzie, Secretary
Beverly Brooks, Member at Large
Daniel Lee, Member at Large
Sandra Moad, Member at Large
Sandy Robertson, Member at Large
Raj Dharmaraj, Past President

Cc: Mayor John Tory, City of Toronto
Leah Snowden, LURA Consulting
MP Ali Ehsassi, MP Willowdale
MPP Stan Cho, MPP Willowdale
Minister Steve Clark, Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
Alexander Brown, TDSB
Maria Rizzo, TCDSB