Toronto's Reconstructionist Synagogue קהילת דרכי נועם

June 21 2021

TO: Chair Pasternak and members of North York Community Council,

RE: Item 25.6 Final Report – Allen East District Plan – Affordable Housing Strategy

Congregation Darchei Noam (DN) is an egalitarian and inclusive community which emphasizes Jewish values that inspire us to make a positive difference in our families, communities and the world at large. The congregation's leadership and track record in developing affordable housing and advocating for poverty eradication embodies our members' commitment to "tikkun olam", repairing the world.

We have proactively championed affordable housing and eradication of homelessness for decades through our sponsorship of Moshav Noam (1995) and Trellis Gardens (2003) affordable, non-profit housing developments and the on-going work of the Social Justice Advocacy Committee and our involvement in Out of the Cold and other initiatives.

We are pleased that an Affordable Housing Strategy is an integral part of the Final Report - Allen East District Plan. Additional affordable housing will help to ease the critical shortage of such housing in the City of Toronto, a situation that has become even more acute with thousands of people losing their jobs and/or work hours as a result of the COVID-19 pandemic. There is widespread consensus that stable, affordable housing is an essential foundation for strong health outcomes and overall quality of life.

However, we respectfully suggest that a more robust strategy to achieve more affordable housing is warranted in this development on City-owned land surrounding public transit that will be implemented over the next decade. The need for affordable housing can be expected to grow in the coming years as Toronto's population is projected to increase by up to one million by 2030. The recommendations in the Final Report – Allen East District Lands identify 300 affordable housing units, a figure first determined in 2016 as we understand, and which would remain public for 20 years.

Subsequently, the City adopted the HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan in December 2019 with housing targets that include 40,000 new affordable rental homes and 4,000 new affordable non-profit home ownership opportunities. As we understand it, The Housing Now Initiative, intended to accelerate the development of affordable housing and mixed-income, mixed-use, transit-oriented communities on City-owned lands, is one part of the 2020-2030 Action Plan. In our view, it appears that the Allen East lands would be appropriate for the Housing Now Initiative which would secure affordable rental units for 99 years and would result in 30 percent of total units (est. 1,200 units) being provided as affordable housing units. It is our understanding that these principles were set by City Council.

Rabbi Tina Grimberg



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As an organization that aims to contribute to sustainable, healthy neighbourhoods in which a wide range of individuals and families will settle and flourish, we urge you to enhance the commitment to affordable housing in the Allen East District Lands by incorporating this development within the Housing Now Initiative.

Regards,

Dan Miller

David McKee, President, Congregation Darchei Noam

cc: Laurel Rothman - Co-chair, Social Justice Advocacy Committee Suzanne Klein - Co-chair, Social Justice Advocacy Committee