

Street Health

March 1, 2021

Dear Planning and Housing Committee,

I am a Nurse Practitioner and have worked at Street Health in the Dundas and Sherbourne area for over ten years. I am writing to express my support for the urgent expropriation of 214-230 Sherbourne Street and the development of rent geared to income housing on site.

If the City of Toronto does not take action to acquire 214-230 Sherbourne Street it will almost certainly be developed into condominiums. The Dundas and Sherbourne community has already seen a substantial loss of shelter, drop-ins, low rent housing, and other social services as the result of rapid gentrification. The development of a condominium at 214-230 Sherbourne Street would cause further harm to the large community of people who struggle to find safe shelter in the neighbourhood.

The property at 214-230 Sherbourne Street has sat empty for over ten years. While the property sits empty many people in the neighborhood sleep on the street and in stairwells and encampments. In the past, over 150 people slept inches apart on mats on the floor the All Saints Church and Margaret's Respite Centre which are located across the street from the vacant property. These respite centres are now closed but the dire shortage of shelter space has still not been addressed. There is an urgent need to build affordable housing in the Dundas and Sherbourne area and the fact that a suitable property has sat empty for over a decade while so many struggle to find safe shelter is preposterous.

214-230 Sherbourne Street is located in an area that has been home to working class people since the mid 1950s. The area is still home to people who are poor and/or homeless and depend on meal programs, health services, longstanding social relationships, public transportation and other vital resources located in the neighbourhood to survive. Rapid gentrification of the neighbourhood has created rising rents and a loss of low rent housing and community services pushing many people out of their community and home and away from the resources they depend on for survival.

Seventy-four deaths were recorded within Toronto shelters in 2020. There is a critical need for affordable housing. The City must ensure the property at 214-230 Sherbourne Street is utilized to support community needs by urgently expropriating the property and developing rent geared to income housing on site. To keep this issue forefront, it is requested that the Planning and Housing Committee pass a motion to ensure funding for expropriation is secured and report back on progress at the next planning meeting in April.

Thank-you,



Jessica Hales, RNEC
Street Health