



TO: **Planning and Housing Committee**

DATE: Wednesday, April 27, 2022

RE: **Modular Housing Initiative: Phase Two - 175 Cummer Avenue - City Initiated Rezoning - Final Report - Ward 18 (Item PH33.3)**

Thank you for the opportunity to speak with you today on behalf of the Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness (TAEH). My name is Kira Heineck, and I am the Executive Director of the TAEH - a network of partners reaching across the city, all united in the vision of ending homelessness. We also serve as your non-Indigenous Community Advisory Board, and co-chair the Toronto Housing and Homelessness Service Planning Forum with SSHA.

We are here today to express our support for the recommendation to amend the City of Toronto Zoning By-law 569-2013 regarding the Phase Two modular housing site at 175 Cummer Avenue in Ward 19, as detailed in item 33.3.

We are once again emphasizing the critical importance of the City of Toronto's Modular Housing Initiative as a tool to meet a range of housing options crucial to the goal of ending homelessness in Toronto. The Council itself has already approved a target of building 18,000 new supportive homes before 2030, and a goal of 3000 new permanent homes was detailed in the 2-year housing action plan released in September of 2020.

The City achieved unprecedented success last year by opening the first 2 buildings within 8 months, creating 110 permanent new homes for people who were previously homeless. These buildings, operated by a partnership of two proven non-profit community and supportive housing providers, continue to operate smoothly demonstrating the efficacy of this initiative.

It is also worth restating that there is homelessness in every neighbourhood in Toronto, and it has been demonstrated repeatedly that even those who have security in jobs, housing, and relationships can become homeless. We also know that if people are able to access supports and services in their own neighbourhoods, they are much more likely to build the capacity and resources needed to return to housing. This means that we need more affordable and supportive housing in each ward across the city, in every neighbourhood in Toronto.

This is why we are urging you today to approve the recommendation to amend the City of Toronto Zoning By-law 569-2013 for 175 Cummer Avenue in order to add modular affordable rental housing to Ward 18. This recommendation follows City Council's request to prioritize building and planning approvals for projects that provide affordable and supportive homes, and the request from Council to the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing to make a Ministerial Zoning order, made in June 2021. Minister Clark, who as you know has approved every other request for a Ministerial Zoning order for modular supportive housing, has noted in his public remarks the value of the Modular Housing Initiative to the City of Toronto, and to our collective efforts to address homelessness in our community.

The challenges presented by community apprehension to providing housing for people previously homeless in their neighbourhoods is worth noting, but there is substantial evidence that here in Toronto – and in many other places – adding new homes like these do not result in the negative outcomes that some people are anticipating. Supportive housing works, and the [TAEH website has a collection of](#)

[resources](#) that can be accessed to support and raise community awareness of its value, including examples of its successful implementation in other cities. Our resources are just a sample of the breadth of evidence that is available to support this claim.

The Community Engagement Summary Report provided as background to this recommendation has clearly shown that when provided an opportunity to actively engage in a process of understanding the purpose, infrastructure, and value that modular supportive housing holds, and to provide input and feedback, community members – including long-time residents of Willowdale – recognize the urgency of providing housing options for people experiencing homelessness. Presented with engaging evidence that supportive housing does not affect property values or increase community safety concerns and offered insight into the reality that the only real differences between those who are homeless and those who are with housing is access to the supports that are needed for people to thrive, community members became more comfortable and open to welcoming new neighbours into Willowdale.

It is crucial to remember the role that community engagement plays in every step of this process, and it is encouraging to see the Housing Secretariat’s commitment to inviting residents into these discussions.

CONCLUSION

To conclude, TAEH encourages today’s discussion to be situated within the context of this Committee’s commitment to delivering more housing for those who are experiencing homelessness in Housing TO and other initiatives. The discussion must prioritize consideration of your target to build 1000 modular housing units in the next ten years.

We commend this commitment and want to uplift the near-unanimous earnest support to Phase One of this initiative in 2020. Our City representatives have shown great strides towards meeting the goals of the Housing TO Action Plan, and strongly encourage the amendment to the Zoning By-law 560-2013 as a step forward in our collective goals of ending homelessness in Toronto.

Thank you,

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