



REGENT PARK
COMMUNITY HEALTH CENTRE

Monday April 5, 2022.

To : City of Toronto Planning and Housing Committee

Re: PH 33.6 Dundas-Sherbourne Neighbourhood Revitalization – Update

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My name is Danielle Koyama. I am a Social Worker at Regent Park Community Health Centre. Regent Park Community Health Centre (RPCHC) has been providing comprehensive health and social services for over 45 years to a diverse group of community members, including those who are vulnerably-housed or homeless, newcomers and youth in the downtown east of Toronto.

We were extremely disappointed that despite losing the bid on 214-230 Sherbourne that City Council voted not to proceed with expropriation. It was unfortunate that Council was not willing to take a stand to protect the neighborhood at Dundas and Sherbourne from an onslaught of gentrification that will follow the likely condo development at this site. We believe that in order for there to be a healthy community, housing needs to be accessible for all people. It is our hope that should the opportunity resurface to purchase the property, given that funds had been identified to do so, the City will re-tender their bid to acquire the site. It is our belief that the cost of doing so will be worth the price in order to save people from further displacement and create the rent-geared-to-income housing that is so desperately needed at that corner. It is about the strategic location of the site and the immense implications for the area.

In the Dundas-Sherbourne Neighbourhood Revitalization – Update, the report speaks a lot about the development goal of “mixed income housing” when in fact this is not what is being planned. The claim that there are 1500 units of “affordable” and supportive housing in planning or development is not reflected in this report. The report at this point identifies 391 units to be built – 24 at 292 Parliament, 100 at St. Luke’s and 267 units at 405 Sherbourne. Out of these 391 units, only 64 will be actual affordable rent geared to income housing that community members can afford. That is only 16%. This is not an acceptable “mix” for the development of housing in this area compared to the desperate need for rent geared to income housing.

In addition, the City of Toronto is not taking action to protect low income housing stock in this area. This includes the rooming house at 230 Sherbourne. This also includes the Inglewood Arms which is the home of 100 tenants and also at risk of being displaced by condominium development. We encourage the City to take the necessary action to actually stop the further displacement of poor people who are residents of the downtown east. The update also includes a discussion about

the redevelopment or “revitalization” of the Dan Harrison complex as well as the final phases of the “revitalization” of Regent Park. Despite both the Mayor and Deputy Mayor opposing the expropriation of 214-230 Sherbourne because there was City owned land possible for development which would be cheaper, there is no plan to increase any rent geared to income housing stock being proposed at either of these sites. While the update indicates that there will be a visioning that will report back at the end of 2023, we would like to encourage the City to increase the number of RGI units in the area; on the city owned land being developed. 40 units is not acceptable. We also would like to note that any revitalization of Dan Harrison must be for the good of the existing community and that their needs must be considered as the priority. Vulnerable tenants cannot be moved out of the area to be put at risk in the absence of their support systems.

As you must all be aware, the community at Dundas and Sherbourne is in crisis. The desperate need for housing is obvious as people continue to freeze to death on Sherbourne Street. As we approach the summer, and as the City moves to close shelters, we urge you to reconsider this direction as it will only intensify the suffering and the issues at present in the area. The shelters remain full. It is unclear how closing spaces will result in anything but further crisis and violence on the streets and in the attack on people forced to be outside with no safe alternatives.

Thank you for your attention in this matter.

Sincerely,

Danielle Koyama
Regent Park Community Health Centre Advocacy Committee