



**Parkdale Activity - Recreation Centre:  
A community where people rebuild their lives.**

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October 31, 2023

Deputation  
Victor Willis  
Executive Director  
PARC (The Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre)  
1499 Queen Street West, Toronto  
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Good morning,

Thank you for the opportunity to provide my comments on item 2023.EX9.3 Generational Transformation of Toronto's Housing System to Urgently Build More Affordable Homes. My name is Victor Willis the Executive Director of PARC.

PARC is a member of the Toronto Mental Health & Addictions Supportive Housing Network, a collaboration of over thirty supportive housing providers including system coordination by the Access Point. The most recent waitlist update identifies 26,478 unique individuals seeking supportive housing. 1300 are currently homeless, 2900 are over 65 and the median wait time is 1886 days, over 5 years and projections of 3939 days or over 10 years as we move forward. There are approximately 7,000 units of permanent supportive housing in our system currently.

A generation ago, I witnessed a newly elected provincial government cancel 300 social housing projects and close all halfway houses in the province in the name of common sense.

As someone who has been working in community-based organizations for almost forty years, the title of this report is encouraging and the recommendations, long overdue. And they make a lot of sense.

In the seventies, a group of volunteers saw many adults living 5 to a bedroom in boarding and rooming houses, on the streets of Parkdale. The idea of PARC was born and incorporated in 1977 and the doors of our drop-in opened in early 1980.

For the past 24 years, the Parkdale Activity Recreation Centre has been developing supportive housing for adults with mental health and addictions histories. In early 2000 a journalist named Adam Vaughn interviewed us about the ten units of supportive housing we were developing, thought to be the only social housing being built in the province at that time.

In 2011 PARC opened Edmond Place, welcoming 33 tenants into 29 units of supportive housing. At that time, the average wait time for a unit was two to three years for over 11,000 individuals. In 2014 the Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust was started. In May of 2019, PARC became the operator and longterm lease of the land trust's first residential property. By this time, the waitlist for supportive housing was over four years for 20,000 people.

In 2019 the TMH&ASHN along with the TAEH started to develop a Supportive Housing Growth Plan. The plan calls for 1,800 units of permanent supportive housing to be developed annually for 10 years.

This brings me to a site in Parkdale.

Attachment 2 of the report list 11 Brock on Table 1: List of High Priority Sites. In February of 2017 the Acquisitions Committee of the Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust convened a community visioning workshop for 11 Brock with over 100 residents, as well as non-profit organizations. Thematically the session identified that this was a unique site and opportunity for social housing and therefore the development should maximize the ability to provide affordable housing by covering most of the lot and developing beyond the height of 4 stories and 40 units.

I strongly urge the Executive and Planning and Housing Committees to review the site so that it can yield much more affordable housing, an investment for this and future generations.

Respectfully,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'V. Willis', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Victor Willis  
Executive Director  
PARC

## Appendix

Access Point Waitlist update as of Sept 30th 2023

**Unique individuals** 26,478

**Waiting for accessible unit** 1,000

**Require 24 hr support** 1,300

**Over 65** 2,900 people;

**Homeless** 1,300

**Require a family unit** 2628

Wait times

- Median wait time of people on the waitlist is 1886 days or 5+ years
- 90th% wait time of people on the waitlist is 3939 days or 10+ years

Homeless applicants to supportive housing in FY 22/23

- 2,200 people who are homeless applied for supportive housing
- 1,073 of the new referrals to housing reported staying in shelters or on the street (56% of respondents)
- Roughly half of all homeless people who applied for housing had been homeless 6 months or less, 16% had been homeless 6 months to 1 year, 31% had been homeless 1-2 years

Housing needs of applicants to supportive housing in FY 22/23

- 48% of new applicants reported being at risk of homelessness
  - 36% reported living informally with friends or family
  - 35% reported unstable living environments
  - 20% reported living in housing that did not meet basic standards
  - 13% reported that they lived in a rooming house or hotel/motel