

**City Council****Notice of Motion**

<b>MM7.20</b>	<b>ACTION</b>			Ward: 18
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**Relocation of Proposed Modular Housing and Designation of 175 Cummer Avenue Green Space as Parkland - by Councillor Lily Cheng, seconded by Councillor Nick Mantas**

*\* Notice of this Motion has been given.*

*\* This Motion is subject to referral to the Planning and Housing Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*

**Recommendations**

Councillor Lily Cheng, seconded by Councillor Nick Mantas, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management, the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, and the Executive Director, Housing Secretariat to explore options to relocate the 59 modular housing units proposed for 175 Cummer Avenue to another property owned by the City of Toronto or the Province of Ontario in Willowdale, if possible, and to report directly to City Council at the July 19, 20 and 21, 2023 meeting.

2. City Council request the General Manager, Parks, Forestry and Recreation to:

a. in consultation with Toronto Community Housing, examine the feasibility of designating the green space and front lawn of Willowdale Manor 175 Cummer Avenue as parkland; and

b. add furniture around the trees using Section 37 funds

and to report directly City Council at the July 19, 20 and 21, 2023 meeting.

**Summary**

There are currently two buildings situated on 175 Cummer Avenue. The modular supportive housing would become the third building and is currently proposed to be added to the northern portion of the property nearest Cummer Avenue. The current buildings are Cummer Lodge - Long Term Care which cares for almost 400 seniors and Willowdale Manor, Toronto Seniors Housing Corporation which houses 256 elderly individuals, most of whom are low-income and ethnically diverse with limited English proficiency.

Since this project was first proposed, two mistakes were made. Firstly, the seniors at Willowdale Manor who live on the property and a mere 20 metres from the potential new neighbours were never consulted in an accessible way. Due to the pandemic, consultations were held online which most seniors were not able to attend. Further, a majority of the seniors are

not native English speakers and require language assistance in Mandarin, Farsi and Russian. This never happened. Although many of the consultations occurred during COVID lockdowns, outdoor multilingual engagement could have happened along the way.

The second mistake was designing the site and ordering the units without zoning being firm and without consideration for the seniors whose input was never meaningfully received. The current site plan eliminates accessible green space and old growth trees that are a treasured amenity for the seniors. The City passed a Zoning By-law when an Minister's Zoning Order was not provided by the province which led to an appeal that is currently pending. This means the units which first sat on a leased TTC parking lot were moved at a cost of \$325.5K to Owen Sound where they currently sit at a rate of \$77K per month.

A relocation of the 59 modular supportive housing units proposed for the front lawn of 175 Cummer Avenue would preserve the green space and the old growth trees the seniors have come to cherish and alleviate the stress they have been experiencing due to the unknown outcome of current Ontario Land Tribunal proceedings. Currently, there is no Plan B for these units. If the City loses the appeal, we will be stuck paying for storage costs indefinitely.

The City of Toronto has created great stress for the seniors by not engaging appropriately with them. They currently live under the threat of:

- the removal of their green space,
- loss of highly coveted parking in order to provide for the staff of the proposed modular supportive housing units, and
- recent Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act designs that are threatening to take away (i) their front soft seating area used regularly for social connectivity and (ii) the stage used regularly for programming.

This has further compounded the seniors' experience of not being valued or heard. The loss of green space, including 26 old growth trees, will negatively impact 600+ seniors, many of whom rely on this area for their recreational, fitness and social activities. The seniors engage in activities such as Tai Chi classes under the trees, walking around the trees (some with their walkers) and gazing out at the canopy from the front benches as well as their apartment windows. Many senior residents have limited mobility and are unable to access other green spaces in the area.

Neighborhood characteristics affect people of all ages, but seniors are affected more than other groups. Older people typically experience higher levels of exposure to neighborhood conditions, often having spent decades in their communities. They have more physical and mental health vulnerabilities compared with younger adults, and are more likely to rely on community resources as a source of social support. As older adults become less mobile, their effective neighborhoods may shrink over time to include only the immediate areas near their homes. Many of the residents of Cummer Lodge sit outside in their wheelchairs with neck supports unattended when the weather is nice. This is an extremely vulnerable demographic whose needs have not been considered.

Special consideration must be given to the people who are given an opportunity to to be housed in the front yard of 600+ seniors who call 175 Cummer their home. Anyone with addiction issues could potentially have a profound effect on the mental health and sense of wellbeing of the seniors living there.

In 1997 a development was proposed for the property that was vigorously opposed by the previous councillor at the time who recognized the importance of preserving this green space for the seniors.

Zoning By-law 818-2022, relating to 175 Cummer Avenue, is currently under appeal to the Ontario Land Tribunal with a case management date set for June 29, 2023. No appeal date has been set. The appellant is Bayview Cummer Neighbourhood Association. Many of the seniors have joined the association in gratitude for the support the association has provided in amplifying their voices.

We must consider the needs of these vulnerable seniors when making decisions about the development of this property and consider preserving as much of the green space accessible from the front of Willowdale Manor as possible if this proposal moves forward. A relocation of the building would maintain the beloved green space and alleviate the stress of the seniors about their future. It would right the wrong of making such an impactful decision without meaningfully consulting the seniors. Further, designating the green space as parkland will allow us to add other amenities that can be enjoyed by the seniors. The seniors have made requests for more seating and shaded areas.

The local councillor is making a commitment to the Housing Secretariat to work together towards finding an alternative location within her ward if it is possible. Due to the constraints of the configuration of the units that were ordered, it is recognized that an appropriate site might not be within the ward. If this is the case, the councillor would work to find a site for a new project.

### **Background Information (City Council)**

Member Motion MM7.20