



March 28, 2023

Toronto City Council  
100 Queen Street West  
Toronto ON M5H 2N2

Dear Toronto City Council:

I am writing on behalf of the Ontario Crown Attorneys' Association to urge you to support the motion of Councillor Pasternak, seconded by Councillor Crawford, "Accessing Justice and Courthouse Safety - Pausing the Closure of the Neighbourhood Courthouses in North York and Scarborough." Our Association has long held the view that moving all of the Toronto Neighbourhood Courthouses of the Ontario Court of Justice into one courthouse in downtown Toronto, the New Toronto Courthouse (NTC), is an extremely misguided proposition for a host of reasons, including the following:

Access to justice will suffer tremendously. Justice participants (including victims, witnesses and those who are accused) will be required to travel oppressively lengthy distances to attend court.

Responsive community-based justice is a critical component of the criminal justice system. Toronto is a large and diverse city and different communities within this city have different criminal justice needs. By moving to one mega courthouse, we will lose the management of those needs which comes with having a courthouse physically in the particular community, staffed with those who are well versed in the needs of that community.

Local businesses (both small and large) which have built up around each local courthouse site have already been hit extremely hard by the pandemic. To shut down their mainstay of business (the local courthouses) following the pandemic would be to run those businesses into certain ruin.

The risk to public safety and security will be greatly increased by bringing all individuals charged with criminal offences (including rival gangs) into one centralized location downtown.

Sincerely,

Betty Vavougiou  
President