

January 23, 2024

To: City of Toronto Budget Committee

The Flemingdon Thorncliffe Inter-Agency Network (“FTIAN”) is composed of public-sector, non-profit agencies and resident-led groups in the Flemingdon Park and Thorncliffe Park neighborhoods, respectively located within Wards 16 and 15. The purpose of FTIAN is to encourage members to engage in cross-sectoral collaboration, information exchange, and partnerships that support the growing needs of the Flemingdon Park and Thorncliffe Park neighbourhoods.

A recent example of FTIAN's work in the community was the pre-budget consultation session we organized and hosted for residents. During the consultation session, the feedback from the community clearly identified the following three areas as requiring greater investment from the City:

1. Enforcement of Bylaws (RentSafeTO and the maintenance and repair of apartment buildings);
2. Community Grants, Partnerships and Programs for Youth; and
3. Access to health-based services.

1. The Maintenance and Repair of Apartment Buildings:

The RentSafeTO program is an effective, long-term solution that delivers significant value to tenants. In 2022, Wards 15 and 16 had some of the highest service request numbers across the City. We routinely see positive results flowing from the work of RentSafeTO and applaud the increased funding directed towards it in this year's budget.

However, we encourage the City to direct its funds not just to the expansion of RentSafeTO's man-power, but to support its enforcement of the Apartment Buildings By-law through remedial action as well. Chapter 354 of the Municipal Code, at section 7.4, enables the City to address the issues in a Property Standards Order if a landlord fails to comply with it. This gives the City the power to make lasting, positive changes for tenants, and also preserves affordable rental housing. However, we rarely see it happen.

Even in the case of a landlord facing prosecution from the City due to a failure to correct issues or pay fines, the City has not stepped in to complete the repairs to ensure tenants have a safe and clean place to live. As a result, even while a landlord faces legal consequences, the tenants are given no reprieve from deplorable living conditions. When

directing increased funds to the RentSafeTO program this year, we ask that the City improve its enforcement of this by-law and use all the remedies available to make a difference for renters.

2. Support Programs for Youth:

There is also a dire need for proactive holistic supports for at-risk and hard to reach youth, particularly in violence prevention, case management and employment training. The youth in Flemingdon Park and Thorncliffe Park are especially impacted by this lack of early intervention, as our neighbourhoods have the highest ratio of young people in the City, and are home to the City's largest high school (Marc Garneau Collegiate Institute) and middle school (Valley Park Middle School). Initiatives like the Community Safety Initiatives are often reactive rather than proactive, and proactive programs such as Youth Violence Prevention are limited in their capacity to offer comprehensive, individualized support services such as case management.

We therefore urge the City to prioritize funding for proactive and holistic youth services in Flemingdon Park and Thorncliffe Park, and address social determinants of health early on. These investments would complement existing youth-focused initiatives from local organizations, such as the Thorncliffe Park Youth Wellness Hub, Gateway Bike Hub, and other in-school and in-community programming. The City's investments are crucial for the immediate well-being of our youth, and will reduce long-term costs by fostering educated, skilled, and well-adjusted citizens.

3. Access to Health Based Services:

Flemingdon Park and Thorncliffe Park are both considered Neighbourhood Improvements Areas by the City of Toronto. Despite this distinction, we have not seen a return to pre-pandemic levels for school based nutrition programs and breast feeding support groups that are typically offered by Toronto Public Health.

According to 2021 census data, Thorncliffe Park is one of the youngest communities with some of the highest birth rates in the City. Thousands of young immigrant families are choosing this neighbourhood to start their new lives here in Canada. While the influx of newcomers boosts our local economy, we remain one of the most impoverished communities. Decreasing access to the aforementioned services has a much deeper

impact on equity deserving communities such as ours, and so should be maintained if not augmented if we are to close the health disparity gap that Public Health is designed to address.

We appreciate this opportunity to share our feedback on the City's 2024 budget and hope you will consider increasing funding and resources to these programs and services.

Sincerely Yours,



**Bhavin Bilimoria, Flemingdon Thorncliffe Inter-Agency Network (FTIAN)
Governance Committee Co-Chair, on behalf of the FTIAN**

CC: Councillor Shelley Carroll, Chair, Budget Committee
Councillor Lily Cheng, Budget Committee
Councillor Jennifer McKelvie, Budget Committee
Councillor Chris Moise, Budget Committee
Councillor Amber Morley, Budget Committee
Councillor Gord Perks, Vice-Chair, Budget Committee
Councillor Jaye Robinson, Ward 15
Councillor Jon Burnside, Ward 16