

July 22, 2024

Dear Members of the Toronto Planning and Housing Committee:

**Re: PH14.6 - Advancing Construction of Affordable Rental Homes at 777
Victoria Park Avenue, Toronto**

Bellwoods Centres for Community Living Inc. (Bellwoods) actively promotes an independent living philosophy for people with varying physical disabilities. The services we provide - together with affordable and accessible housing - are critical to that success. Housing initiatives like the one proposed for 777 Victoria Park Avenue make living in the community a reality for the population we serve.

Established in 1957, Bellwoods is a charitable, not-for-profit organization that provides affordable, accessible housing and community-based support services for adults with physical disabilities. Our personal support workers and Independent Living (IL) facilitators provide services to clients who reside at one of our many housing sites or through Attendant Outreach (AO) Services provided in a person's own homes, at school, or place of employment. We also have 15 Residential Care Units that help individuals transition back into the community following an illness or debilitating injury.

The opportunity to provide housing together with wrap-around services at 777 Victoria Park Ave. is critical to enabling many population groups to remain living in the community and to age in place. Furthermore, this initiative is one of many under way as part of Toronto's Housing New initiative, that will help Toronto realize development of a significant number of new rental homes that will remain in public ownership and support the need for affordable housing in perpetuity.

While we understand concerns have been expressed regarding parking and an increased volume of traffic in the area should this housing project advance. However, these concerns must be weighed against the lack of affordable and accessible housing that is a real and significant issue.

This project promises to provide much-needed relief by offering affordable housing options that are also accessible to people with disabilities. By doing so, it



HEAD OFFICE

3 Concorde Gate, Suite 200
Toronto, ON M3C 3N7

T: 416-696-9663
F: 416-696-9481

E: admin@bellwoodscentres.org
www.bellwoodscentres.org



will promote inclusivity and ensure that all members of our community have a fair chance to live in decent housing, regardless of their financial situation or physical disabilities. Without it, many marginalized population groups will be at risk of hospital admission, inappropriate admission to long term care, and homelessness.

Given Bellwoods 65-year history in the business of helping people with disabilities live and thrive in the community, we can say with conviction that the benefits of this project extend beyond just the clients that will be served; they enhance the social and economic fabric of the community.

Bellwoods strongly supports this initiative and urges the City of Toronto to approve and advance the development of this housing project. Thank you for considering the needs of people living with disability in the community and for your ongoing commitment to improving the City.

Sincerely,

Susan Andrew
Interim CEO, Bellwoods Centre