



**MORE NEIGHBOURS
TORONTO**

Dear Members of City Council,

RE: NY15.4 - 1875 Steeles Avenue West - Zoning By-law Amendment and Rental Housing Demolition and Conversion Applications - Referral

About More Neighbours Toronto

[More Neighbours Toronto](#) is a volunteer-only organization of housing advocates that believe in building more multi-family homes of all kinds for those who dream of building their lives in Toronto. We advocate for reforms to increase our city's ability to build more homes in every neighbourhood. We are a big-tent organization with members across the political spectrum who are committed to counterbalancing the anti-housing agenda that has dominated Toronto's politics, created an affordability crisis, and cost burdened a new generation of aspiring residents. We are firmly committed to the principle that housing is a human right and believe Toronto should be inclusive and welcoming to all.

Position

More Neighbours Toronto is writing to request that this Zoning By-law Amendment for the site at 1875 Steeles Ave W be referred back to the Director of Community Planning for North York to allow any remaining issues to be resolved. As we wrote in [our previous submission](#), this development will provide 960 homes, including 120 rental replacement units and 12 additional new affordable rentals, in addition to new parkland, improved park access and an improved pedestrian experience along Steeles. It is near York University and access to the University will be improved by the addition of dedicated RapidTO bus lanes along Steeles.

Given all of this, as well as the significant public consultation and staff work that has already been done, and the staff recommendation for approval, we were disappointed to see North York Community Council vote for a refusal. While the City must consider the issues raised by Sanofi Pasteur, there are existing City policy frameworks that allow industry to shape nearby development in positive ways that allow for new housing while protecting employment lands.

Just this month, I listened to [a deputation from a representative for Redpath Sugar on TE15.7](#), describing such an agreement. It allows them to give input on the compatibility of development applications that come into the area, requesting mitigation measures for noise or other potential issues. Could a similar framework be developed in this area? A referral should be granted to explore this, particularly because there are already several residential high-rise proposals in this area where planning work is underway.

On a personal note, I am a resident of a residential high-rise apartment building and I am fortunate enough to be able to walk to work. In fact, Sanofi Pasteur used to have a facility in the same building at Sunnybrook that I walk or bike to every weekday. This proximity to work has been a tremendous benefit to my quality of life and I know that many of my co-workers live in the same cluster of residential apartment buildings for similar reasons. In fact, they are some of the only affordable options in the area.

City policies to protect jobs cannot be separated from City policies for residents who work in those jobs. At this year's budget process, you heard from many agencies and departments, from paramedics to City Planning, describing their challenges in recruiting and retaining workers who cannot find affordable places to live in Toronto. Many department heads described how their employees live outside of the city and have long commutes; they then leave the department when jobs become available closer to their homes. We need a framework that will give people new options and end the trend of young people and families leaving Toronto.

Finally, I am trying to imagine how the tenants in the existing building feel. It was surely stressful to learn that their building was going to be demolished and that they would have to find new homes until work on their new rental replacement units was completed. Many tenants may have already made plans to move. But the prospect of a new unit with air conditioning and modern amenities, new transit and park access would have been promising. Now, after all of the consultation and work, their lives and plans are set to be upended again, with uncertainty about when or whether the ageing rental stock in the city will be upgraded. Why were these tenants put through all of this? The City must consider how this was allowed to happen if the end result is going to be a refusal.

Instead, please support a referral and allow staff to work to resolve these issues for new homes in North York.

Regards,

Colleen Bailey,
More Neighbours Toronto