



**MORE NEIGHBOURS
TORONTO**

Dear Members of North York Community Council,

RE: PH15.4 NY15.4 - 1875 Steeles Avenue West - Zoning By-law Amendment and Rental Housing Demolition and Conversion Applications - Decision Report - Approval

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 supports this Zoning By-law Amendment for the site at 1875 Steeles Ave W. This development will provide 960 homes, including 120 rental replacement units and 12 additional new affordable rentals. The site is near York University and has good access to the City's park and ravine system.

We hope that the City will continue to prioritize existing tenants when finalizing the rental replacement deal. Redevelopment of existing apartments is a consequence of the City's Official Plan to keep apartments separate from Neighbourhoods, despite its stated commitment to mixed-income communities. This redevelopment will provide replacement units with air conditioning, a topic that Council has been looking to address since most of the older rental stock in the City does not have central air. The geo-exchange system will allow cooling for these units in a more sustainable way as the City adapts to climate change.

The parkland dedication, improved park access and streetscape improvements will make for a more pedestrian-friendly area with transportation options. However, the City has a role to play by following through on its commitment for RapidTO bus lanes along Steeles that will allow easier access to the University subway line and York University.

Finally, I would like to provide an alternative view to that put forward by the Ridgeway Ratepayers' Association, who question the City's ability to cope with multiple developments in the large area between Keele and Bayview. I am sympathetic to the challenges of the site-by-site approval process and how it becomes difficult to track all of the changes in an area, but this is not a reason to object to each individual development. I speak from some experience as a resident of the fast-growing Yonge and Eglinton area and I have confidence that Planning staff will monitor potential issues along Steeles; indeed, they have placed a holding provision on this very zoning change to ensure that infrastructure will be ready.

I also object to the implication that new highrise apartments negatively affect physical and mental health. Apartments have been an important part of neighbourhoods throughout Toronto for decades and will continue to be so in the future. With improved park access, sidewalk safety improvements and a RapidTO bus lane, this neighbourhood is likely to become more suitable for active transport, allowing improved physical health. The area is also growing in employment and some of the 300 new employees at Sanofi-Pasteur who are cited as part of the traffic concerns for the area might live in these new homes and walk to work, decreasing the need for car traffic in the area. We also know that our housing shortage has increased housing precarity and homelessness, which has negatively impacted the mental and physical health of those residents. Restricting development only makes this worse, although it changes how visible the issue remains in certain neighbourhoods.

Please support the staff recommendations and approve this Zoning Bylaw Amendment.

Regards,

Colleen Bailey,
More Neighbours Toronto