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Planning & Housing Committee
Toronto City Hall
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RE : PH11.1 - Housing Now - Bloor-Islington

Planning & Housing Committee,

For over 5-years, since this “Housing Now” affordable housing site at Islington subway station was first announced in December of 2018, our **HousingNowTO.com** civic-tech volunteers have attended all of the many public-meetings and on-line consultations with City Planning, CreateTO and various local Etobicoke Councillors about how to to unlock these City-owned properties to ensure they are obtaining best-value and city-building objectives, including the delivery of new, permanent affordable-rental housing apartments on City-owned transit-oriented lands.

Our volunteers, along with other community members have also reviewed all of the available public documents about these City-owned properties at **3326-3330 Bloor Street West** and **1240-1226 Islington Avenue** on the CreateTO & City Planning websites.

HousingNowTO fully supports the current City-Initiated Zoning By-law Amendment (ZBA) and Plan of Subdivision for the Islington station Housing Now lands – and we align with the materials in the current approval report by City Planning staff.

We are grateful to the local Councillor, CreateTO, Housing Secretariat and City Planning staff for listening to our HNTD volunteers’ submissions over the last 5-years – and agreeing to increase the target-density on this development from 1,250 proposed units in December 2018 to 1,415 total units in today’s 2024 report. That 13% increase in proposed building-massing, and the addition of +165 units to the building design alone generated Fifty-Five (+55) additional permanent affordable rental apartments (99-years) in the plan that is now on file.

That improved massing also provides more viable opportunities to improve the depth-of-affordability within the estimated ~471 new affordable rental units – if the City of Toronto is provided with appropriate levels of financial-support by higher levels of government for the overall delivery of the Housing Now program.

However, we would also like to draw some attention to the many challenges that the City of Toronto experienced on these Islington station Housing Now lands to ensure that future roadblocks and delays on similar sites can be mitigated and avoided. This was a complex multi-jurisdictional site requiring proactive, actionable participation from multiple overlapping agencies and governments, including -

- CreateTO
- City Planning
- Housing Secretariat
- Toronto Transit Commission
- Toronto Parking Authority
- Hydro One
- Provincial Minister of Infrastructure
- Ontario Infrastructure and Lands Corporation (OILC)
- Infrastructure Ontario (IO)

It has literally taken years for the City of Toronto to tentatively acquire a tiny portion of the hydro corridor lands for a future public road to facilitate the proposed transit-oriented affordable housing development – and that deal is still not 100% final yet.

This tiny hydro lands acquisition was a bureaucratic roadblock that long-ago needed direct-intervention by both the Mayor and the Premier’s offices to avoid this years-long delay, but for most of the Housing Now program there seemed to be little institutional appetite within City Hall to put these kinds of “wicked problems” directly on to the executive desks of our political leaders.

Sometimes, on Housing Now sites - our Mayor, our Premier and our Prime Minister will all need to be politely asked to “*knock the required heads-together*” within their respective branches of the public service if the new apartment delivery goals of the Housing Now program will really be accomplished by 2030.

As always, our open data and civic-tech volunteers are happy to answer any questions the committee or city staff may have on affordable-housing development best practices – and how to make most effective use of Transit-Oriented Lands to help alleviate Toronto’s rental-housing crisis.

Yours,



Mark J. Richardson
Technical Lead – [HousingNowTO.com](https://www.housingnowto.com)

Appendix A – (Islington Station) Housing Now site – Public Meeting (Dec. 2019)

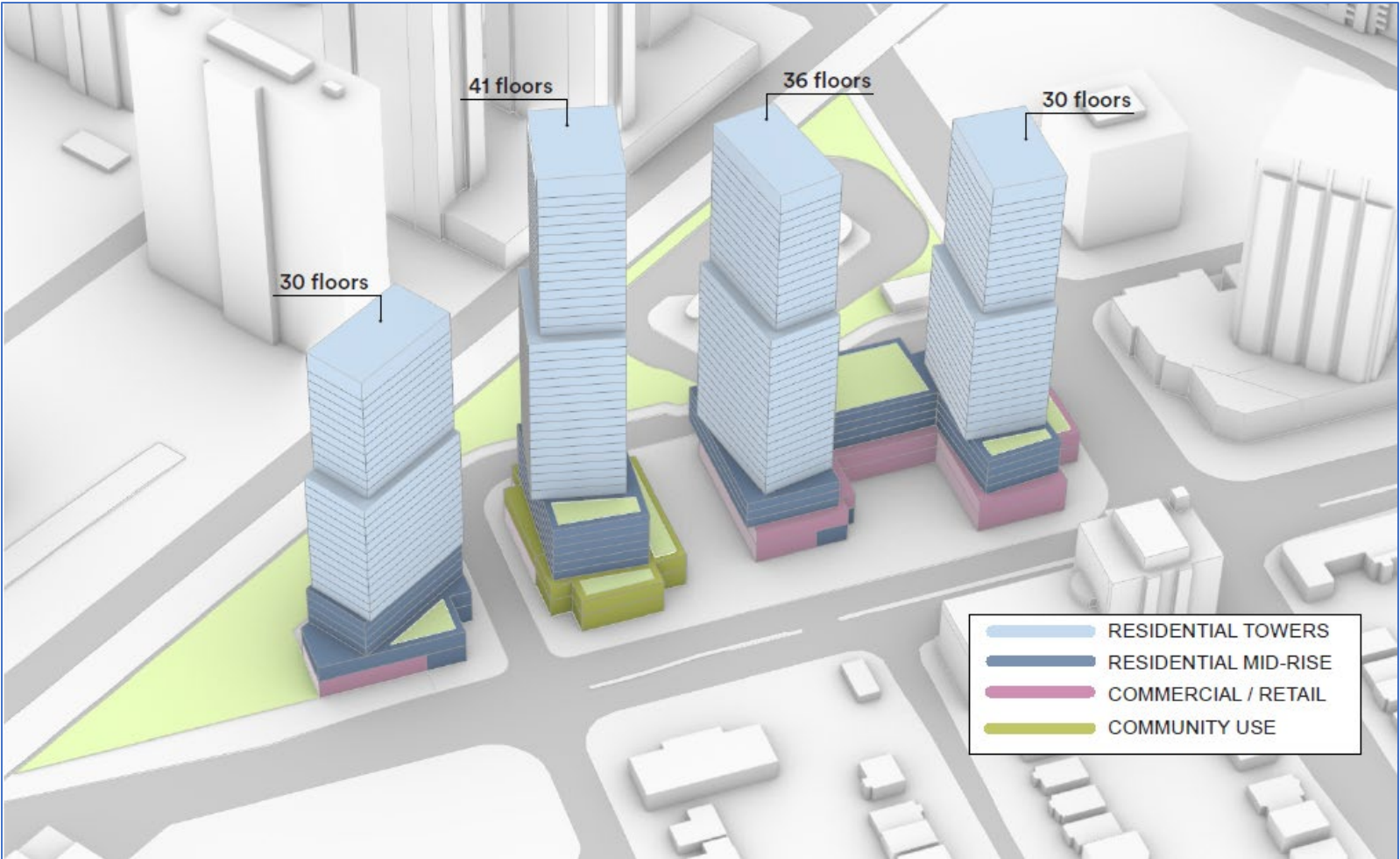


Former City Councillor Mark Grimes opens the Housing Now public-meeting about ISLINGTON and KIPLING subway stations, and sends Mayor John Tory's warmest regards to Etobicoke residents.

LINK - <https://x.com/HousingNowTO/status/1204552266654658560>

Appendix B – (Islington Station) Housing Now site – current state





Appendix D – (Islington Station) Housing Now site – required Hydro Easement



