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ELIZABETH JASSEM - ARBO Seniors Health Village (SHVA) Inc.

DEPUTATION for the TORONTO CITY COUNCIL PUBLIC MEETING #31, June 25-27, 2025

Agenda Item: NY24.2 - 1350 Sheppard Avenue West – Zoning Amendment Application – Decision Report - Approval

FORWARD-THINKING CONCEPT MODEL – ARBO Seniors Health Village (SHVA) Inc.

How a Human-Centered Approach Shapes Our Vision for Positive Impact between People, Places, and Urban Planning

- 1. We draw inspiration from *De Hogeweyk* in the Netherlands—a visionary model village established by a highly experienced nurse in Weesp, near Amsterdam. Designed as a pioneering care facility for elderly individuals with dementia, De Hogeweyk demonstrates that all-day reminiscence therapy significantly improves quality of life. Compared to traditional nursing homes, residents are more active and require less medication.
- At ARBO Seniors Health Village (SHVA) Inc., we also promote multi-generational living through our "Apartments for Life" concept. This model encourages engagement between seniors and younger generations, fostering a meaningful sense of purpose while still providing access to essential care services in a supportive, communal environment.
- SHVA offers urban core excitement through an affordable rental community that emphasizes
 inspiration over age. Our community invites people of all ages and life stages to explore "what's next"
 in an environment built around walkability, accessibility, and services that support personal well-being.
- 4. It takes a village—and ARBO Seniors Health Village (SHVA) Inc. is designed to be just that: a thriving, inclusive community where everyone can flourish.
- 5. As a YC community leader, since 2019, I have worked tirelessly to **educate**, **advocate**, **and promote** the ARBO Seniors Health Village (SHVA) Inc. as a replicable model for future communities. Our goal is to enable seniors to remain active participants in society while addressing critical issues of affordability and accessibility.

- 6. ARBO Seniors Health Village (SHVA) Inc. is committed to **total inclusion**, actively working to engage youth with disabilities in meaningful roles within the community. They will live, work, and thrive in the SHVA environment, which is designed to support their growth and full participation.
- 7. In partnership with **REENA**—a non-profit supporting individuals with diverse abilities—20% of our affordable, accessible units are allocated to ARBO Seniors Health Village at the ARBO District. This commitment is not theoretical; it's a concrete, shared achievement built since 2020.
- 8. ARBO Seniors Health Village (SHVA) Inc. is an **integrated development strategy** based on advanced, 21st-century health and behavioral sciences. Using principles from Evidence-Based Design (EBD) and Neuroarchitecture, it aims to improve health outcomes and job opportunities for seniors and youth in Downsview's ARBO District.
- 9. As Principal Co-founder and Chair of the Board of YCSSC, I had initiated and led the strategic development of SHVA since its inception. With a long history of advocacy, I can confidently state that SHVA is a **community-proven**, **visionary model** ready for implementation as part of the City of Toronto and CLC's approved planning framework.
- 10. Over five years, ARBO Seniors Health Village (SHVA) Inc. has built trusted partnerships with respected leaders including:
 - ZAS Architects + Interiors Paul Stevens, Sr. Principal and Architect
 - Rick Hansen Foundation Canada Doramy Ehling, CEO
 - REENA Bryan Keshen, CEO
- 11. Since 2019, our team of dedicated professionals has committed itself to the **efficient and compassionate delivery** of ARBO Seniors Health Village (SHVA) Inc. Our approach is grounded in visionary community capacity building and includes:
 - **Ongoing grassroots development** in York Centre Downsview, led by my engagement of local activists.
 - Collaboration with key organizations such as:
 - o Canada Lands Corporation James Cox (VP) & David Anselmi (Regional Director)
 - City of Toronto Planning Abi Bond (Housing Secretariat) & Valesa Faria (Development Review)
 - Hon. MPP Michael Kerzner & Hon. Minister Raymond Cho, Ontario Ministry for Seniors and Accessibility
 - OCAD University Prof. Yutta Treviranus, Founder and Director of the Inclusive Design Research Centre
 - *City Councillors Pasternak, Perruzza, and Matlow,* supporting our July 2022 and May 2024 approvals for 1,400 residential units in the ARBO District
 - Sabira Tejani Senior Advisor, Economic Affairs, Consulate General of the Netherlands
 - o Prof. Theo Kocken VU University, Stichting Cardano Development, The Netherlands
 - ZAS Architects, Rick Hansen Foundation, and REENA
 - **IP protection and business development support** of ARBO Seniors Health Village (SHVA) Inc. through Toronto Small Business Enterprise Centre (TSBEC), with ongoing guidance from Small

Business Consultant Jith Dravin and the City of Toronto's Economic Development & Culture department.

ARBO Seniors Health Village (SHVA) Inc. is fully prepared to proceed with the implementation of our **envisioned, community-supported, and municipally approved** plan in collaboration with REENA and their development partner, Rose Corporation.

Please endorse **ARBO Seniors Health Village (SHVA) Inc.** effort as a bold, inclusive, and proven model for the future of senior and intergenerational living benefiting the City of Toronto.

We look forward to securing **final approval for SHVA** at the upcoming **Toronto City Council Public Meeting on June 25-27, 2025**, and celebrating this milestone with our valued partners. Together, we will deliver a project that benefits all stakeholders — **Canada Lands Company** (a federal Crown corporation), **the City of Toronto, the Downsview community, and residents across the GTA.**

Elizabeth Jassem, Founder and CEO ARBO Seniors Health Village (SHVA) Inc.

Reference 1 – Letter to CLC in support to REENA



Elizabeth Jassem, C (416) 770 – 7680 195 Waterloo Ave., Toronto, ON M3H 3Z3

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Toronto, May 5th, 2025

To: CANADA LANDS CORPORATION and CANADA MORTGAGE and HOUSING CORPORATION

Re: Letter of Support for the Arbo Lands Housing Proposal – REENA, the Rose Corporation, and Serotiny

Today, as a proud and honoured recipient of the prestigious King Charles III Coronation Medal, awarded by Her Excellency the Right Honourable Mary Simon, Governor General of Canada, and the Honourable Doug Ford, Premier of Ontario, I am pleased to express my full support for REENA's proposed affordable housing development at the Arbo Lands site. This important initiative is being submitted by REENA in partnership with The Rose Corporation and Serotiny.

- <u>As a long-time, highly respected visionary leader and community catalyst</u> in York Centre's Ward 6, my mission has always been to authentically support and empower my aging community. This is why I have championed the vision of the multi-generational ARBO Seniors Health Village (SHVA) Inc., a concept plan approved by North York Community Council (NYCC) and the City of Toronto Council in July 2022 and again in May 2024. With REENA's leadership in affordable housing development at the Arbo Lands site, this vision can now be successfully realized.
- <u>As strategic thinkers, developers, and managers, we established ARBO Seniors Health Village (SHVA) Inc.</u> in collaboration with Enterprise SB, City of Toronto, as a purpose-driven social enterprise. Our ongoing commitment supports the original York Centre Seniors Steering Committee (YCSSC) mission, working organically with the Downsview community. This mission is clear: to safeguard the well-being of older adults who have lived here for decades and ensure they can age healthily, happily, and with dignity—right where they belong.
- 3. <u>Our collaboration with REENA builds on years of dedicated work through YCSSC and ARBO SHVA Inc.</u>, driving purpose-led development in the Downsview community. This effort has consistently received strong support from the Hon. Michael Kerzner, MPP for York Centre, Councilor James Pasternak, various City of Toronto departments, and the Canada Lands Corporation (CLC) Downsview team. Since 2019, our relationship with CLC has resulted in a highly successful exchange of ideas and collaboration.
- 4. <u>Our work has been acknowledged by senior CLC officials</u>, including James Cox (Vice President, Real Estate Central Region), David Anselmi (Regional Director, Real Estate), and Stéphan Déry (President and CEO), who oversee the Downsview Lands, including Arbo. We have also established meaningful partnerships with the Rick Hansen Foundation, ZAS Architects, and the Consulate General of the Kingdom of the Netherlands. These collaborations have connected us with healthcare innovators from Canada and the Netherlands, supporting our efforts from 2019 through 2025. With this network, we are confident that we can collaboratively address current community concerns, including the increase in housing units from 1,400 to 1,700 in the ARBO District.

5. <u>YCSSC began as a grassroots, federally incorporated organization committed to protecting the rights and well-being of seniors.</u> Through strong advocacy, we have championed age-friendly, fully universally designed (UD), accessible, and inclusive communities. We are deeply committed to ensuring that older adults—especially those with mobility challenges, fixed incomes, and diverse cultural backgrounds—have access to affordable, supportive housing that enables them to live independently and with dignity.

REENA's Arbo Lands proposal represents a meaningful and strategic step toward realizing our shared vision of creating a better, more inclusive world for all. The proposal includes:

- 303 rental units, including 122 units to be operated by REENA for individuals with developmental disabilities and complex support needs.
- 72 units (24%) offered at below 80% of the Median Market Rent.
- 36 units (12%) designated as deeply affordable, specifically for seniors and individuals receiving support through ODSP.
- 100% of the units designed to meet universal design standards, with over 30% featuring enhanced accessibility features.
- Innovative hybrid mass timber construction by Serotiny, promoting sustainability, energy efficiency, and long-term value for residents.

In addition REENA has committed to supporting of our shared vision through:

- Designating up to one-third of the units in Building 1 for seniors from the YC Downsview area, including members of the Italian community subject to housing legislation and applicable program guidelines.
- Collaborating with myself (as Chief Vision Officer) and ZAS Architects on the architectural and cultural design of Building 1, ensuring alignment with the SHVA vision.
- Hiring local staff, including individuals from the Italian-speaking community, continuing REENA's successful practice of community-based staffing in other developments.
- Partnering with Italian service agencies. In Building 2, we anticipate that high-support services will include those delivered by organizations such as META and Vita, among others that primarily serve the Italian community.

We recently toured the Lou Fruitman Reena Residence and were truly inspired by its accessible, thoughtfully designed spaces, its warm, community-centered layout, and its inclusive atmosphere. It stands as a model we fully support and aim to reflect in the Arbo Lands development.

As we continue to advance our proposal for the establishment of ARBO Seniors Health Village (SHVA) Inc. within the ARBO District, it is essential that we work collaboratively with REENA's project. Together, our initiatives can form complementary and connected stages—contributing holistically to the creation of a vibrant, multi-generational, age-inclusive community in the heart of Downsview.

We believe this project will not only provide housing for seniors but also offer a space for youth, fostering an environment where individuals of all ages can live and work together. This vision is supported by thoughtful design strategies, cultural sensitivity, and seamless access to essential services.

We strongly urge Canada Lands Corporation and CMHC to approve REENA's visionary proposal, setting a new standard for affordable, 100% accessible, and inclusive housing in York Centre.

Sincerely yours,

Elizabeth Jassem



James 🕈 Pasternak

Councillor | York Centre - Downsview

Toronto City Hall City Hall, 100 Queen St. West, 2nd Floo Toronto, Ontario M5H 2N2

Ben DiRaimo Community Planning – North York District North York Civic Centre 5100 Yonge Street Toronto, ON M2N 5V7

RE: Support for a Seniors' Village complex within the William Baker District

Dear Mr. DiRaimo,

I am writing today to express my support for the introduction of a Seniors' Village complex as part of the first phase of the upcoming William Baker District. This model has been championed by the York Centre Seniors Steering Committee's (YCSSC) as they continue to secure funding and support for the latest draft project iteration: YC SSC EVERYONE's Seniors Health Village (SHV[™]).

The YCSSC is an incorporated non-for-profit advocacy and development group, located in Ward 6 – York Centre, creating sustainable impact through knowledge-based designs. Their purpose is to provide leadership in pursuing a diverse, livable, and vibrant community on behalf of seniors. The YCSSC will be working closely with other community organizations to build an inclusive community for seniors. This is the type of social capital that is fundamental to provide our seniors a good quality of life.

The proposed project is a continuation of YCSSC's work as they are currently engaged on serving York Centre seniors. This project has a variety of initiatives to help seniors and will help bridging the gap between the elderly and the existing community. This could be a unique innovative community-led and co-created mixed-use development for senior residential living and medical services in the Downsview neighborhood.

Once again, I offer YCSSC my full support as their work is vital to the community. I would also then encourage Community Planning to continue engaging with YCSSC and the applicant, to design and incorporate a functional, accessible and inclusive Seniors' Village complex, satisfactory to the Acting Director of Community Planning, as part of the first phase of the upcoming William Baker District.

Sincerely,



November 27, 2023

MICHAEL KERZNER

York Centre

Dear Sabrina Tejani,

Senior Advisor Economic Affairs Consulate – General of the Netherlands (Toronto) 1 Dundas St. West #2106 Toronto, ON M5G 1Z3

As the Member of Provincial Parliament for York Centre, I am writing to the General Consulate of the Kingdom of the Netherlands to express my support for the York Centre Seniors Steering Committee (YCSSC) in requesting that they screen the documentary "Your Hundred Year Life" at their 2nd Seniors Summit Town Hall Public Event planned for January 14th, 2024.

Elizabeth Jassem, the Board Chair of the YCSSC, is a community leader in York Centre that works to help and support the ageing community. Elizabeth is organizing the YCSSC 2nd Seniors Summit Town Hall with the goal to achieve a better understanding of urgent ageing needs and to educate the population of York Centre in hopes of solving these issues.

Elizabeth and the YCSSC have plans to develop EVERYONE's Seniors Health Village at ARBO (formerly William Baker) which will help York Centre residents become deeper involve decision makers in the senior health space. This initiative will work collaboratively with the 3 levels of Canadian Government to ensure that the voices of seniors around York Centre are empowered to share their experiences. I have worked with Elizabeth since my election in 2022, since our first meeting it has been clear to me, she cares deeply for the seniors in York Centre and around Ontario. Her work has served to improve the lives of seniors in her community and her aspirations for the future will serve to help an even greater number of seniors be heard.

The YCSSC is a federally incorporated organization with the purpose protecting senior citizens' rights by providing leadership to improve the quality of their lives. The YCSSC works with many local stakeholders and community organizations to advocate for seniors and their needs. This work helps to create an inclusive environment in community development to allow for needs-based development. YCSSC has worked with our office on their Seniors Health Village proposal that aims to develop residential units that improve the lives of older adults and seniors in York Centre.

Curro Contraction

Elizabeth has informed us that at the beginning of October 2023, she had the opportunity to connect with leaders from Canadian and Dutch Healthcare stakeholders at Victoria College U of T. There, a screening of "Your Hundred Year Life" was presented and from this Elizabeth has wanted to share this important documentary with the seniors' community at York Centre. At this event, Elizabeth met with my colleague Minster for Seniors and Accessibility, Hon. Ryamond Cho, where she spoke to him about the YCSSC's plans with the SHV.

I would like to reaffirm my support for Elizabeth Jassem and the York Centre Seniors Steering Committee in their request to screen "Your Hundred Year Life". Their work for the community is invaluable and their 2nd Seniors Summit Town Hall Public Event offers an opportunity to continue to educate on the unique problems facing senior populations.

Sincerely,

MICHAEL KERZNER

York Centre

Michael Kerzner, York Centre, MPP



October 10, 2019

TO WHOM IT MAY CONCERN:

RE: Optimum Development of the William Baker Lands

The Downsview Lands Community Voice Association ("DLCVA") is a longstanding residents' association focusing on issues relating to Downsview Park and adjacent communities. Our monthly newsletter is distributed to over 550 subscribers. Our association is actively engaged in all conversations related to the development of the above lands.

It is our understanding that exploratory discussions on the possibility of a much-needed "seniors health village" in the William Baker lands have been initiated. The DLCVA supports the creation of a seniors village and with this letter we strongly request a seat at the table at all future discussions of this matter.

We strongly support Ms Elizabeth Jassem, President of York Centre Seniors Steering Committee (YCSSC) and her vision for a Seniors Health Village (SHV). We acknowledge her notable effort in creating a truly authentic concept; an age-friendly, sustainable, universally accessible, affordable housing development for seniors based on innovative design for seniors' well-being; a seniors village that empowers disadvantaged citizens, integrates them into the community, and creates opportunities for their productive contribution to society.

It is our belief that the various parties involved in the planning of the William Baker neighbourhood realize the dire need for a multi-use seniors health centre in Downsview and the uniqueness of this once-in-a-lifetime opportunity. Our association intends to do its utmost to make this possibility a reality.

Downsview Lands Community Voice Association Inc.

Rosanna Seca-laboni, Secretary Albert Krivickas, Vice President Rita Del Casale-Cimini, Treasurer Linda Gargaro, Historian Patrick O'Neill, Public Relations Giuseppina Casciato, Membership Donald Di Prospero, Planning Reference 5 - Snapshots showcasing some of our activities and inspirations.







York Centre Seniors Steering Committee

A non- for- profit organization providing focused on the quality of life for seniors with an inter-generational approach through proactive research, creative design, implementation and evaluation of exceptional, ethical, compassionate, safe and inclusive services for the elder community.









HISTORY AND MISSION

As of 2018, we have been a federally incorporated organization (YC SSC) York Centre Seniors Steering Committee with our Purpose of Corporation role to protect seniors citizens' rights by providing leadership to implement to the quality of their life.

We're proposing a community-led, co-created and co-produced Seniors Health Village (SHV[™]) at William Baker as preferred priority for CLC to work collaboratively with YC SSC on new mixed-use project development for approximately 900 residential units and health services on 8-10 acres.

Our envisioned project for the improvement of older adults and seniors in the area we live is completely supported by a wellestablished community in Ward 6, as well as City Councillors and the Canadian government.



WHAT WE PROPOSE

In 2000, former Prime Minister Jean Chrétien promised the William Baker land to be used for the improvement of seniors and community at large in the North York / Downsview area. Since then, much has been said but not much has been done. We want to propose a SENIORS HEALTH VILLAGE that will not only benefit the people who need it most.



Our Supporters / Partners

BAYCREST CENTRE

RICK HANSEN FOUNDATION

INTL FEDERATION OF AGEING

DOWNSVIEW LANDS COMMUNITY VOICE ASSOCIATION (DLCVA)

BETTER BUILDINGS PARTNERSHIP, CITY OF TORONTO

INCLUSIVE DESIGN RESEARCH CENTRE, OCAD UNIVERSITY

BERNARD BETEL CENTRE FOR SENIORS

REENA FOUNDATION

UNISON HEALTH & COMMUNITY SERVICES

LUMACARE DOWNSVIEW SERVICES FOR SENIORS

WILSON VILLAGE BIA

DUKE HEIGHTS BIA

HOUSE OF COMMONS CANADA

TORONTO WARD 6 YORK CENTRE

THE REBEL MAMA

KEHILLA RESIDENTIAL PROGRAM

A BRIEF:

SINCE 2018, THE YC SSC HAS BEEN WORKING TIRELESSLY TO UNDERSTAND THE NEEDS OF ITS COMMUNITY AND COMMUNICATING THOSE DEMANDS TO THE MUNICIPAL, PROVINCIAL AND FEDERAL GOVERNMENT THROUGH TOWN HALL SUMMITS AND MULTIPLE MEETINGS

DURING THE COVID-19 PANDEMIC AND THE LOSSES OUR CITIZENS HAVE SUFFERED DUE TO POOR SENIOR TREATMENT, IT HAS NEVER BEEN MORE APPARENT AND URGENT TO PUT TOGETHER AN ACTION PLAN TO CHANGE THE WAY WE LIVE, AND MOVE FORWARD TO A BRIGHTER FUTURE.

THOSE WHO STAND BY US AND WANT TO SEE THIS CHANGE HAVE OFFERED IMMENSE INSIGHT AND SUPPORT.



WHAT YC SSC WOULD LIKE TO ACHIEVE:



- THE SUPPORT AND ENDORSMENT OF HON RAYMOND CHO, ONTARIO MINISTRY SENIORS & ACCESSIBILITY
- PARTNERSHIP WITH ONTARIO MINISTRY TO ACCESS CLC LAND AT WILLIAM BAKER, DOWSVIEW for YC SSC Neighbourhood/place-based project: YC SSC EVERYONE's Seniors Health Village (SHV[™]) Created and Build With Us, Not For Us!
- SUPPORT TO ASSEMBLY ENVISIONED YC SSC COMMUNITY HEALTH DESIGN CENTRE with IDRC OCADU as part of instrumental Downsview Lands New Deal Settlement for new social innovation contract agreement between YC SSC, City of Toronto, Northcrest Developments and Canada Lands Company.

Predictions About the Future of Assisted Living

- BOOM IN HOME HEALTH AND PERSONAL CARE
- ECO-FRIENDLY SENIOR LIVING
- AN INCREASE IN AMENITES FOR SENIORS
- MULTI-GENERATIONAL HOUSING OPTIONS
- MORE SENIOR-FRIENDLY NEIGHBOURHOODS
- SENIOR CO-HOUSING
- SENIORS HELPING SENIORS/NEIGHBOURS
- THE DECLINE OF NURSING HOME MODEL
- THE RISE OF TECHNOLOGY IN SENIOR CARE

THE FUTURE OF SENIOR LIVING

FORWARD-THINKING CONCEPTS

<u>De Hogeweyk</u>, operated by nursing home Hogewey, is a gated model village in Weesp, Netherlands. It has been designed specifically as a pioneering care facility for elderly people with dementia. The benefit of using all-day reminiscence therapy at Hogewey, compared to traditional nursing homes, is that the residents with dementia are more active and require less medication.

MULTI-GENERATIONAL LIVING

The Humanitas – "Apartments for Life" community in Rotterdam, Netherlands is a great example of multigenerational living that allows seniors to feel useful and engaged in the community around them while still benefitting from care services and communal living.

URBAN CORE EXCITEMENT

<u>The Stories at Congressional Plaza</u> in Maryland, USA is a rental community that doesn't focus on age, but rather the idea that communities should inspire people of any age and stage to explore "what's next." It's a supportive community that will rely on the walkability and accessibility of its location and services that support personal well being.

IT TAKES A VILLAGE

Communities like <u>Beacon Hill Village</u> in Boston, USA have flourished for years now. Perhaps this model can serve as inspiration for developing new communities that allow seniors to actively participate in their communities. This may be a model that also helps with affordability.

We also hope to work inclusively with youth with all disabilities to create a solid working environment when they can flourish and contribute. They will live/work and play (entertain) in our WB SHV village.

REENA confirmed already 10% of affordable/accessible units to them only. So, what we do it is not a theory. It's a fantastic reality!



YC SSC



NEW YC SSC PROPOSED CONCEPT DESIGN PREFERRED COMMUNITY SOLUTION (1)



WHAT MAKES THE YS SCC SENIOR VILLAGE DIFFERENT

What we are proposing is a high-level concept that will optimize senior living and bring it into the future. By focusing on community needs, integrating nature and designing with purpose and impact, YS SCC hopes to integrate the needs and demands of the modern-day senior citizen while offering something sustainable that will benefit the community for years to come.

YS SSC - ZASA CONCEPT PLAN











AGE BETTER @



DOWNSVIEW













NEW DATA ON DISABILITY

in Canada, 2022

In 2022, 27.0% of Canadians aged 15 and older, or 8.0 million people, had at least one disability. This represents an increase of 4.7 percentage points from 2017.







*Updated imag

The change observed since 2017 is not statistically significant at a 5% significance level, meaning that it is likely due to sampling variability.

^a The category "Women+" includes women and some non-binary persons, while the category "Men+" includes men and some non-binary persons. Given the small size of the non-binary population, data aggregation to a two-category gender variable is most of the time necessary to protect the confidentiality of the responses provided. Source: Statistics Canada, Canadian Survey on Disability, 2022.

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