



**MORE NEIGHBOURS  
TORONTO**

Dear Members of City Council,

**Re: NY25.6 - 2674-2704 Yonge Street and 19 Alexandra Boulevard - Official Plan Amendment and Zoning By-law Amendment - Decision Report - Approval**

***About More Neighbours Toronto***

[More Neighbours Toronto](#) is a volunteer-led 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 these Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendments for a 13-storey seniors residence** that includes independent living, assisted living and memory care spaces, as well as 31 rental replacement units. Seniors housing is in great need throughout Toronto. Although private care is not an option for everyone, when such facilities are available, it can reduce the long waitlist for other facilities. The need will only increase as Canada's population ages.

More detailed comments follow but our members had discussions at the in-person consultation about the building height and its importance to the living conditions for senior residents, as well as to accommodate the rental replacement units. We would particularly like to thank those members of North York Community Council who recognized that this project falls along the Yonge subway line and that every ward in the city is being asked to add density along transit. This area is no exception and those Community Council members demonstrated leadership and helped to protect the rights of existing tenants in the community. We encourage City Council to follow their lead and support the amendments for this project.

***Consultation***

The report provides a summary from a May 22nd public consultation. Our members attended an April 22nd consultation where we had conversations with staff, Amica and Rockport. We left comments supporting the zoning changes that do not appear in the report's consultation summary, which focuses on concerns. It is not clear whether the date is an error or whether there were two consultations and only the feedback from one was noted, but we are writing in part to re-iterate those comments. It also seems important to note this date since there were

concerns that the priority stream resulted in a rushed process but in fact there were nearly 2.5 months between the April meeting and North York Community Council.

The consultation itself had a confusing setup. Members of the public (including More Neighbours volunteers) who entered the room and went to the left were met with several large boards that claimed that aspects of the project were “big issues,” “a serious concern” or “disproportionate scale.” We eventually realized that these boards did not belong to the developer or City Planning but had apparently been set up by local residents. The City and the applicant were providing information on the right side of the same room. **We would strongly discourage City Planning from allowing this setup in the future** because people attending a meeting advertised on the City Planning Consultation website likely expect the information in the room to be from the City or the applicant, possibly the councillor, but not other third parties. Several deputants noted that they had difficulty engaging with the applicants and these parallel setups may have contributed to the confusion. Our members did not have any trouble speaking to the developer or operator once we actually managed to locate them in the consultation room.



Examples of poster boards at the April 22nd City of Toronto meeting for this project that were not put up by the City of Toronto or the developer.

## Height and Rental Replacement

More Neighbours opposes a height reduction and off-site rental replacement unless all existing tenants agree. Proposals to locate the new units on Marlee Ave., 4 km from their current homes at the closest point and a similar distance from the Yonge Line, show a disregard for those tenants' quality of life, even if it were feasible, which is unlikely given current market conditions. Renters' voices are often dismissed by longtime homeowners as transient members of the community; yet here the suggestion of some longtime residents seems to be to force transience upon them and permanently move these neighbours out of the community.

On the other side of Yonge, at 241 Redpath Ave., 900 metres from Eglinton Station, a 12-storey building is being knocked down and replaced with a 38-storey building. Given this, a 13-storey building 1 km from Lawrence Station on Yonge, is a reasonable mid-rise proposal, particularly given the need for housing options for seniors in the area. These two areas are defined differently in the Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan, but both are planned for growth.

When I questioned [why low-rise areas much closer to the subway](#) were remaining low-rise during the Midtown Zoning Review, it was explained that this was a result of the Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan discussions that had begun in 2012 and that opted to put growth into the existing Apartment Neighbourhood and on Avenues, even when those areas are further from the subway. While this seems a strange choice given the greater likelihood of disrupting local businesses and the higher proportions of renters likely to live in these areas, it is indeed the plan that was approved by Council in 2018 and amended by the province. We would welcome councillors revisiting that plan, but this proposal is in line with its principles and should be approved.

### **Parking and Shadows**

I am a resident of the area, on Erskine Ave., and wanted to share my experience living in the neighbourhood since I did not see it represented in the public comments. A large portion of the comments and deputations focused on nearby low-rise areas but Erskine is part of the Apartment Neighbourhood east of Yonge. This is important because this area is one of the few places in the city that is affordable for many healthcare workers.

I myself work in a healthcare setting (although not on the front lines) and feel fortunate that the Apartment Neighbourhood allows me to live close enough to work to walk or cycle every day. In fact, in the almost 15 years that I have lived in the community, I have never owned a car. I know that several of my colleagues also live in the apartments in this area. All of this is to say that workers at the new facility might cycle or walk to work (as myself and many of my colleagues do), or they might take transit (as many of my neighbours do when they walk the 900 m from Erskine to Eglinton station to get to their jobs downtown). These types of commutes are quite normal for many Toronto residents. In a transit-accessible area, requests for additional parking should be carefully considered because they can add costs to projects, including priority projects like this one. I would encourage the City to add a BikeShare station and extend the Yonge bike lanes North, which would be a benefit to active transport in the area that extends far beyond this one project.

Also, in recent weeks, I have very much appreciated the shade provided by the taller buildings when walking along Yonge Street; sections of the street without shade have been nearly unbearable. I understand that this is at odds with the City's shadow policies and insistence that Toronto is a winter city. However, I do not believe that this is an isolated opinion based on the way that residents cluster in the shade on street corners and patios.

More Neighbours therefore encourages you to support this project at the proposed height.

Regards,  
Colleen Bailey,  
More Neighbours Toronto