

## City Council

### Notice of Motion

MM28.41	ACTION			Ward: 18
---------	--------	--	--	----------

**Feasibility of Establishing an Intercultural Hub or Association of Community Centres at 45-47 Sheppard Avenue East - by Councillor Lily Cheng, seconded by Councillor Mike Colle**

- \* *Notice of this Motion has been given.*
- \* *This Motion is subject to referral to the Economic and Community Development Committee. A two-thirds vote is required to waive referral.*
- \* *Communications have been submitted on this Item.*
- \* *A revised Member Motion was posted on March 25, 2025.*

**Recommendations**

Councillor Lilly Cheng, seconded by Councillor Mike Colle, recommends that:

1. City Council request the Executive Director, Social Development, Finance and Administration and the Executive Director, Corporate Real Estate Management Services in collaboration with the General Manager, Parks and Recreation, the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, the Executive Director, Development Review and the General Manager, Economic Development and Culture to examine and report on the feasibility of creating an Intercultural Hub or Association of Community Centres at 45-47 Sheppard Avenue East, including identifying funding opportunities beyond the 10-year capital plan, including Community Benefit Charges from the 45-47 Sheppard Avenue East application and future development applications in the area, and available Section 37 funds, and report prior to the consideration of the Official Plan and Zoning By-law Amendment Application report for 45-47 Sheppard Avenue East.

**Summary**

In the heart of Toronto’s rapidly growing and increasingly diverse Willowdale neighbourhood lies an urgent need for spaces that bring people together, celebrate our differences, and create opportunities for all. The area covered by the North York at the Centre Secondary Plan is home to 80 percent racialized community members, and 76 percent of the population are newcomers to Canada. The proposed Willowdale Intercultural Hub will support this remarkable diversity by offering an inclusive, accessible, and dynamic community space where people from all cultures can come together, share experiences, access essential services, and create lasting connections.

The demand for services, support, and cultural programming is growing at an unprecedented rate, but the infrastructure simply isn’t keeping up. The population density covered by the North York at the Centre Secondary Plan is intense, with 27,299 people per square kilometre

(roughly 272 people per hectare) - six times higher than the city-wide average or 4,297 people per square kilometre. This reflects a population that has been growing rapidly, with an increase of 145 percent in the last 20 years, or just over 7 percent annually.

There is a development application in process for 45-47 Sheppard Avenue East where Federal Courts are currently located. The developer is planning to build four towers including the addition of a fairly large park. This is the last project in the area with such a large floor plate. The developer has expressed a willingness to include community space in their design.

Currently, the dense Avondale neighbourhood in which the Intercultural Hub would be built lacks any walkable community space. This is a significant gap in an area where density is high and families, seniors, and newcomers are in desperate need of accessible, community-centred spaces for socializing, gathering, and learning. The Willowdale Intercultural Hub will fill this void by creating a vibrant community space that can be easily accessed by foot or public transit.

The greatest challenge at this stage is the time gap between the development application and when the building will be built, which is likely beyond 10 years due to the current Federal Court lease, outside of the 10-year Facilities Master Plan. This requires some creativity and dedication to identify the potential funding resources or build a pathway towards their identification that would allow the development application, slated to come to North York Community Council in July 2025, to move forward with the inclusion of the Intercultural Hub Association of Community Centre. A report on the expansion of Association of Community Centres is expected in October, however, this too would be too late for the development application.

Willowdale is home to numerous beautiful cultural groups that actively serve thousands of residents. These groups often struggle to find adequate, affordable and reliably available space to offer programs, services, activities, and host events. Some of these groups include:

- Ukrainians in North York – Serving the growing Ukrainian diaspora.
- Orkid Gallery (Persian artist collective)
- Azerbaijan House – Offering programs for Azerbaijani youth.
- I2CRC Persian Community Non Profit
- Seniors Groups, including: Hanka Korean Seniors Group, Ariana Persian Group, “May You Live to Be 100” Persian Seniors Group, Korean Seniors Ping Pong Group, Chinese Seniors Ping Pong Group
- Loving Heart Chinese Tai Chi Association
- The Cross-Cultural Community Services Association
- Tirgan Persian Arts Organisation
- Trinidad and Tobago Impulse Steel Orchestra
- Korean Women's Community Services by KCWA Family and Social Services
- Seed Foundation - Supporting children’s education.
- A Better Future For All – Volunteer-based community service organization.

By supporting the Willowdale Intercultural Hub, the City of Toronto will be making a statement: that our city is stronger when we invest in spaces that bring diverse communities together.

## **Background Information (City Council)**

Revised Member Motion MM28.41

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2025/mm/bgrd/backgroundfile-253656.pdf>

## **Communications (City Council)**

(March 23, 2025) E-mail from Orkideh Salehi (MM.Supp)

(March 23, 2025) E-mail from Orkid Gallery (MM.Supp)

(March 22, 2025) Letter from John(Yang) Song on behalf of the Loving Heart China Tai Chi Association (MM.Supp)

<https://www.toronto.ca/legdocs/mmis/2025/mm/comm/communicationfile-188275.pdf>

(March 24, 2025) E-mail from Lalin Hasanova (MM.Supp)