



**MORE NEIGHBOURS
TORONTO**

Dear Members of Toronto City Council,

RE: MM34.11 - Comments on the Request for a Minister's Zoning Order to Restrict Building Heights - 1875 Steeles Avenue West

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 opposes the endorsement of a provincial Ministerial Zoning Order to limit height below previous City staff recommendations at 1875 Steeles Ave West. Governments that have repeatedly stated that housing is a priority should explore every alternative before reducing housing. Below, you can find our submission to the Minister via the Environmental Registry of Ontario that outlines our objections in more detail.

Regards,
Colleen Bailey,
More Neighbours Toronto



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November 2, 2025

Hon. Rob Flack
Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing
12th Floor, 777 Bay Street
Toronto, ON M7A 2J3

Dear Minister Flack,

RE: ERO 025-1108 Request for a Minister's Zoning Order (MZO) to restrict building heights to protect a biomanufacturing campus in the City of Toronto

More Neighbours Toronto is a volunteer 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 the ability to build more homes in every neighbourhood. We are a big-tent organization with members across the political spectrum who are nevertheless committed to counterbalancing the anti-housing agenda that dominates Toronto's politics, and has created increased costs and environmental burden for a new generation of aspiring residents.

More Neighbours Toronto opposes the proposed height restriction at 1875 Steeles Ave W. Our members were involved in the rezoning process, [supporting the staff recommendations](#) for approval at North York Community Council and then [asking for a referral](#) in order to resolve any outstanding issues when Toronto City Council went against staff recommendations to reject the proposal.

Toronto is the economic engine of Ontario but struggles to recruit and retain workers due to the high cost of housing. The Toronto Region Board of Trade has produced several [reports outlining this challenge](#), but More Neighbours Toronto sees this firsthand. Many of our members are young Toronto residents who have seen friends leave the city; some former members have moved away for new job opportunities or to find somewhere more affordable to start a family.

Yet, despite lower wages and higher cost of living than many other large North American cities, Toronto remains attractive to many workers and entrepreneurs because of its high quality-of-life. The proposed application at 1875 Steeles Ave West was a perfect example of this:

- 960 homes, including 120 rental replacements and 12 additional new affordable rentals.
- Proximity to York University and jobs in the nearby employment lands, with plans to improve access through dedicated RapidTO bus lanes along Steeles.
- New parkland and improved access to the existing park.
- An improved pedestrian experience along Steeles.

In addition to 1875 Steeles Ave W, a Ministerial Zoning Order could have implications for other new housing in the Dufferin and Steeles area. This includes proposals from First Capital Realty and the University of Toronto, as outlined in the submissions on [City Council item on NY15.4](#). Together, these sites have the potential to add thousands of new homes to Toronto's housing supply at a time when the city and province are struggling to meet their housing targets. The province must therefore consider the implications that an MZO would have on this site, as well as the way that a late-stage, restrictive Ministerial decision adds new risks and uncertainty for builders at a time when building is already challenging.

My understanding is that the proposal raised concerns from Sanofi about the proximity of an apartment building and, when considering how best to address those, I would ask you to consider that policies to protect businesses cannot be separated from policies that enable people to work at those businesses.

I can add some personal experience as someone who works in scientific research and who is a resident of a high-rise apartment building. When I consider job offers and life elsewhere, I always think of how fortunate I am that there is an apartment that I can afford that allows me to walk to work every day. This proximity reduces my transportation costs and means that I can avoid the long commutes that would otherwise be necessary. This is a tremendous benefit to my quality of life that has factored into my decision to stay in Toronto and Ontario. I know that many of my co-workers live in the same cluster of residential apartment buildings for similar reasons. In fact, my walk is through Toronto's ravine system - the same ravine system that 1875 Steeles Ave W proposed to access.

I believe that there are alternative policy frameworks that allow industry input on nearby development in positive ways that allow for new housing while protecting employment interests, both of which are important goals of this government. For example, the City of Toronto has an agreement with Redpath Sugar that allows them to request mitigation measures for noise or other potential issues (described [here in a deputation from a representative for Redpath Sugar](#)). The site at 1875 Steeles Ave W is already zoned for residential and the existing apartment was built in 1972, where it has co-existed with the nearby employment lands. As such, we believe that the Minister should consider alternatives to resolve any issues that might arise from a different apartment building on the same site.

Both the City of Toronto and the Government of Ontario have been working to address the housing shortage. It would be disappointing to see the potential homes here reduced without exploring alternatives. We appreciate the opportunity to comment and hope that the Minister finds this information useful when making a decision. More Neighbours Toronto is available should you or your staff wish to discuss further.

Sincerely,

Colleen Bailey
Director, More Neighbours Toronto