



DEPUTATION

To: Planning and Housing Committee.

Date: April 9, 2025.

Re: PH20.1 - 7-9 Wardlaw Crescent – City-Initiated ZBA.

The Toronto Alliance to End Homelessness (TAEH) is a community-based collective impact initiative committed to ending homelessness in Toronto. Our network includes non-profit organisations that support those living with homelessness and those who are housed and who must spend a disproportionate amount of income on housing, as well as affordable and supportive housing developers, property managers, and landlords.

TAEH works directly with the City of Toronto in its mandates surrounding homelessness and maintaining and growing affordable housing stock in the city, including engagement on client support services and funding. This includes TAEH co-chairing the Toronto Housing and Homelessness Service Planning Forum with both the City of Toronto Shelter and Support Services, and the Housing Secretariat.

TAEH is also the non-Indigenous Community Advisory Board to the City of Toronto on housing and homelessness.

The supportive housing project at 7-9 Wardlaw Crescent in North Etobicoke is precisely the type of project the City of Toronto needs to develop for the City to have any chance of reaching its goal of creating 18,000 new supportive housing units between 2020 and the end of 2030. Since Toronto has, from 2020 to 2024, only built 1,763 new units of supportive housing by the City's count, leaving an existing deficit of 7,237 units in terms of the goals of the HousingTO 2020-2030 Action Plan, the construction of any new units of supportive housing is to be applauded.

The construction of supportive housing, even more so than of (deeply) affordable housing, is highly sensitive to financial fluctuations based on changes to interest rates, construction supply chain disruption, and building materials and labour costs. Since the margin between a financially feasible project and one that cannot pencil out is so thin, time is the most critical element in assessing the likelihood that a planned supportive housing project will actually end up being built.

As such the initiative displayed by the Development Review Department in taking the lead on quickly moving forward with this proposed zoning by-law amendment (ZBA) is

precisely the type of collaboration needed from the City to ensure that supportive housing projects are speedily approved, and construction quickly commenced. The Executive Director and City planners are to be commended for this innovative approach seen most recently with the successful ZBA for the City-led supportive housing project at 35 Bellevue Avenue adopted by City Council in October 2024.

35 Bellevue Avenue is a City-led project and is one of the 5 sites under the City-led Public Developer Delivery (PDD) model, and so a City-initiated ZBA is consistent with the purpose of this model. While 7-9 Wardlaw Crescent was identified under the Generational Transformation of Toronto's Housing System Plan in November 2023 as a City-led High Priority Site, like 35 Bellevue Avenue, it is not one of the PDD sites. TAEH is heartened to see the Development Review Department choosing to initiate a ZBA for a non-PDD site.

To help in shortening the time from application submission to construction TAEH encourages the Department to consider making it standard practice to initiate such needed ZBAs not only for High Priority Sites, but for *any* supportive housing project under consideration that is consistent with the City's goal of creating 18,000 supportive housing units by the end of 2030.

Finally, TAEH notes and acknowledges the concerns raised by the Albion Islington Square BIA in its deputation submitted on this agenda item. We believe that concerns over crime and neighbourhood cleanliness are reasonable ones for any and all BIAs in Toronto to prioritise. However, TAEH does not believe that the mere addition of a supportive housing development to the neighbourhood will exacerbate these concerns. While identifying those in need of tenant supports with crime and cleanliness is unfortunately still widespread, we believe that this cliché needs to be put to rest: crime and anti-social behaviour are no more prevalent in such *supported* tenants than with the tenant population in general.

Reinforcing this belief, TAEH observes that the proposed development will be adjacent to the Salvation Army Islington Senior's Shelter at 2671 Islington Avenue and will share resources and services with the new tenants of 7-9 Wardlaw Crescent. Establishing such a relationship will additionally benefit the said tenants as they (re)integrate into the neighbourhood – for some of them are already neighbours.

Thank you,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Peter G. Martin', with a stylized, flowing script.

Peter G. Martin
Housing Solutions Manager
647-913-7305
peter@taeh.ca