



Wednesday May 6, 2026

Gord Perks
Chair Planning & Housing Committee
City of Toronto

Re: Item PH30.3

To the Chair and members of the Planning & Housing Cmte

I am writing to you today as the Lead of the Toronto Supportive Housing Network to add our voice of support to the proposed women's shelter slated to open in 2028 at 3838 Bloor St West by StreetHaven at the Crossroads. The Supportive Housing Network represents over forty different agencies that provide a wide continuum of outreach, supportive and affordable housing, community services, including child and seniors care. We see the impact of community safety, shelter, housing and recovery every day.

We know that a woman's life expectancy, when homeless, is 36 years, less than half of the Canadian average of 84. Sadly, homelessness has not ended yet the solution is quite simple: Provide safe and dignified spaces for people, in this case women, to shelter securely so that healing and recovery is possible. Then provide access to affordable and supportive housing. These are the pathways to fully housed residents.

Policy changes required

Given the overlapping policies encouraging growth, it is unfortunate that the building was not already allowed as-of-right, and that the site continued to be subject to the former Etobicoke Zoning Code. The rezoning application added unnecessary staff time and cost to the City's shelter project, both to prepare and review the rezoning application.

The need for an Official Plan amendment also demonstrates an ongoing issue with the use of Secondary Plans in Toronto. The Etobicoke Centre Secondary Plan, like all other Secondary Plans,

takes priority over other Official Plan policies. There is also no set update timeline for Secondary Plans to ensure they remain consistent with Official Plan updates over time.

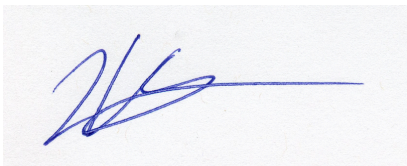
Secondary Plans can therefore become an impediment to City Council approved general policies, as was the case here. An Official Plan amendment was required to revise the Etobicoke Centre Secondary Plan to allow for a shelter on this site, which also adds time and cost to the shelter project. This is despite a multi-decade attempt by City Council to make it easier to construct municipal shelters.

The proposed use of a holding provision for this application is confusing and hopefully unnecessary. The staff report states that the development will only add nominal flows to a sewer that had pre-existing capacity constraints. The applicant is acting on behalf of the City of Toronto to develop a shelter that the City of Toronto wants and needs. Surely the City should not prevent itself from beginning to develop the site until after infrastructure upgrades are operational. There must be a better way for the City to coordinate with itself than a holding provision.

The Toronto Supportive Housing Network supports the City's Homelessness Services Capital Infrastructure Strategy. The City desperately needs more shelter spaces. We hope that the Planning and Housing Committee and City Council approve this item and that this shelter can begin construction as soon as possible. We also hope that this item demonstrates the need for wider reform in the City's land use policies and procedures. Shelter project budgets and City staff time are not unlimited resources and delays hurt our most vulnerable residents. Time and money spent on the City submitting zoning and Official Plan amendments to itself for review are time and money not spent on creating more shelter spaces. Every day added to project schedules for procedural hurdles is an extra day from the life expectancy of this city's most vulnerable residents.

We look forward to seeing this item passed by the Planning & Housing Committee at tomorrow's meeting.

In solidarity and support,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to be 'V. Willis', with a long horizontal line extending to the right.

Victor Willis

Lead, The Toronto Supportive Housing Network