

Proposed New Affordable and Supportive Homes at 7-9 Wardlaw Crescent: Frequently Asked Questions

The City is proposing to develop new affordable and supportive housing at 7-9 Wardlaw Crescent. On March 11 and 17, 2025, City staff held two community engagement sessions to share information about the proposal, answer questions, and hear feedback. Below are answers to some of the most frequently asked questions about the project.

1. What is the City proposing at 7-9 Wardlaw Cres.?

The City is proposing 51 new affordable and supportive homes at 7–9 Wardlaw Cres. within a four-storey mass timber building. The building will include 51 private studio apartments each with their own bathroom and kitchenette. The building will offer indoor and outdoor amenity space for residents, such as a commercial kitchen, shared laundry, lounge and dining room, as well as office space for the housing provider.

The building is not a shelter or transitional housing. The building will offer permanent rental housing. These homes will operate as rent-geared-to-income, meaning no household will pay more than 30% of their income on rent. The housing provider will also provide wrap around support services to ensure residents are supported to maintain their housing and improve their health and well-being. Staff will be in the building 24 hours a day, 7 days a week.

2. How will this project be different from a shelter?

Supportive housing is permanent rental housing, where tenants have their own private apartment with a kitchenette and a bathroom, make a choice to live there, sign a lease, and pay rent. As with other rental buildings, these tenancies are governed by the *Residential Tenancies Act* which sets out rules and obligations for both the landlord and the tenant. Importantly, supportive housing includes wrap-around customized supports for each individual tenant based on their goals and needs, to support them in improving their health and well-being.

Emergency shelter programs are important to provide safe spaces for people experiencing homelessness to stay, but are not a long-term response to this crisis – housing is the solution to homelessness. In shelters, residents don't sign leases or pay rent, often reside in congregate living spaces, and supports focus on helping individuals to access housing opportunities as well as other basic needs and wellness supports.

3. Why was this site chosen?

City staff use site selection criteria approved by City Council that include whether the land is owned by the City, Official Plan and zoning by-law considerations (e.g. whether it is designated for residential use), site servicing and development potential, and proximity to transit, social services, and amenities.

The City purchased these lands in 2018 to expand the shelter system, which led to the seniors shelter program operating at 2671 Islington Ave. by the Salvation Army.

The City regularly reviews its properties for opportunities to build new affordable and supportive homes. This location is one of almost 100 [approved by City Council in November, 2023](#) as priority sites for building new affordable housing.

4. The City is building too much affordable and supportive housing in our community. Can this be relocated?

It's important to be clear on what the engagement process focuses on and what it doesn't. The engagement process is related to the proposed zoning for the lands to permit the development, and the City is seeking feedback about the building that will be built here. Zoning is about the property and the building, not about people including who will live in the new building.

The project at 7-9 Wardlaw Cres. is the City's first new supportive housing development in Etobicoke North. Since 2019, twenty-five (25) supportive housing developments led by the City or its Indigenous and non-profit partners are either completed or underway, across 13 wards in the city. New supportive homes are needed across Toronto to ensure everyone has a warm, safe place to call home. More information about projects underway is [available on the City's website](#).

Some examples of successful projects include:

- 540 Cedarvale Ave. (Beaches-East York), a former parking lot in East York across from a school and community centre, now provides homes to 59 formerly homeless seniors and older adults. The building opened in 2022 and is operated by WoodGreen, a non-profit organization based in the community.
- 321 Dovercourt Rd. (Davenport) and 11 Macey Ave. (Scarborough Southwest) opened in 2020 and 2021, providing 44 and 56 new homes respectively for formerly homeless individuals. These projects are operated by The Neighbourhood Group.
- 877 Yonge St. (University-Rosedale) opened in 2021 and provides 244 new affordable homes with supports for a diverse range of residents exiting homelessness. Located in Rosedale, this project is operated by St. Clare's Multifaith Housing Society.

5. Who will live in the new homes?

This engagement process is about the zoning for the building, not who will live there. The City can't designate buildings for people through zoning.

The building will provide safe, supportive housing for residents in need of a permanent home, and may include seniors and older adults, youth, and refugees/newcomers experiencing or at risk of homelessness. The City will work closely with the housing provider to identify and match potential tenants with the supports offered on site.

6. How can I apply to live in this housing, or support a friend or family member in need to get on the list for these new homes?

Currently there is no application process or waitlist for this building. Tenants for these homes will be identified from among people experiencing or at risk of homelessness, through a process co-managed by the City and the housing provider.

The City and the non-profit operator will work together to ensure tenants are connected with supports that best meet their needs.

7. Who will operate the site?

The City is working with a network of North Etobicoke based agencies to operate the new homes. The lead agency is YWS who, subject to executing agreements, will lease the building from the City. To support tenants in the building, YWS will work in collaboration with Midaynta

Community Services, Rexdale Women's Centre, Delta Family Resource Centre, and Albion Neighbourhood Services.

8. How will the City ensure the operator provides quality services to tenants and takes care of the building?

Once the building is complete, the City will enter into a lease agreement and Contribution Agreement with the provider to establish their responsibilities, funding agreements, and provide oversight. Through these agreements, the City outlines requirements related to managing the building in a state of good repair, being a good neighbour, managing tenancies, and providing supports to residents. The City actively manages its relationships with supportive housing providers through reporting, site visits, and participates directly in the tenant selection and matching process to ensure tenants are matched to the right supports.

9. What supports will be offered to tenants?

Support services will be delivered by the housing provider, with trained, qualified staff on-site 24/7. Specific services are provided based on the needs of residents and are tailored to their individual goals. Often, support services will include the following:

- housing stability and eviction prevention, such as managing arrears, help with moving in
- support with daily living activities, such as life skills training, learning how to cook, help with laundry, groceries, technology, and others,
- support accessing primary health and mental health care services (such as doctors, psychologists, dentists), and harm reduction supports where required, and
- connections with community and economic supports such as: accessing volunteer and employment opportunities, training and development programming, food security programs, income assistance programs, etc.

10. What about neighbourhood safety?

The City has completed many new supportive housing projects in diverse neighbourhoods, and works closely with community and the housing provider to successfully integrate these projects into the neighbourhood. This includes working closely with the local Police Division, to establish strong communication channels and ensure the new building contributes to community safety.

Based on experience on completed projects here in Toronto and other communities where there is supportive housing, we do not anticipate any increased public safety issues in the neighbourhood as a result of the new housing. YWS, an experienced non-profit housing provider, will be responsible for maintaining positive relations with neighbours and addressing community concerns.

By providing vulnerable residents with a safe place to call home with customized supports, supportive housing contributes to community safety.

11. How were neighbours notified about this project and how do I share my input?

The City has hired an engagement consultant (Public Progress) to support outreach and engagement with neighbours and stakeholders. Over 220 flyers and invitations to the community meetings about the proposed development were distributed within an approx. 200m radius of the proposed development. This exceeds requirements under the *Planning Act* of a 120m radius. In addition, two large development signs were posted on site. Public Progress also reached out to area stakeholders and neighbours, such as the Business Improvement Area, to introduce the project and answer questions.

In addition to the two community meetings held to date, residents can share their feedback through an [online survey](#), and are able to [participate in the City Council decision making process](#), on April 10 at the Planning and Housing Committee.

12. Was a park promised on this site as part of the new shelter opening?

The City undertook community engagement as part of opening the shelter at 2671 Islington Ave., and through that process community members expressed interest in more greenspace including at 7-9 Wardlaw Cres. This feedback was considered and the option explored, however since that time, the City has experienced a worsening housing and homelessness crisis exacerbated by the Covid-19 pandemic and is prioritizing its lands for affordable housing as [directed by City Council in 2020](#). City Council subsequently [made a decision in Fall 2023](#) to prioritize the land at 7-9 Wardlaw Cres. for new affordable housing.

Decisions about new parkland are guided by the City's [Parkland Strategy](#), adopted by Council in 2019, which identifies Parkland Priority Areas. The area surrounding 7-9 Wardlaw Crescent is identified as having sufficient parkland available and is not a priority area for the development of new parks.

13. What amenity spaces will be provided for in the building?

The building will include 51 private studio apartments each with their own bathroom and kitchen, as well as indoor and outdoor amenity space for residents, such as a commercial kitchen, shared laundry, lounge and dining room, as well as office space for the housing provider.

14. What is mass timber?

Mass timber buildings are made of wooden structural load bearing components such as columns, beams etc. They are typically manufactured off-site in factories by fastening multiple layers of wood together and are engineered for high strength. They have similar fire performance as concrete and steel but are lighter in weight. Mass timber building components can be brought to job sites just in time for installation, reducing overall construction time, noise, and disruption.

The Wardlaw design meets and exceeds the requirements under the Toronto Green Standard Version 4, City-owned Facilities stream, through the use of a mass timber structure and fossil fuel free design.

15. Will parking be provided on-site?

Parking is not proposed for this development. Residents are not expected to own their own vehicles. City staff are working on a shared parking agreement to provide access to parking spaces for building staff.