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■ AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROJECT WILL ALLOW SENIORS TO AGE IN PLACE ON THE DANFORTH

SURGICAL RETROFIT

Matt Durnan

A social services agency and affordable housing provider is seeking to convert a nearly century-old church on the Danforth into affordable seniors' housing that will allow seniors to age in place, while retaining internal space for church uses as well as the external façade that has been part of the neighbourhood character for decades.

WoodGreen Community Services is working with the **Danforth Baptist Church** on a project that will bring affordable seniors' rental housing to North Riverdale in the form of an innovative eight-storey mass timber building that would be integrated into an existing church that currently occupies the property.

Currently at the site plan approval stage, the proposed development includes 50 affordable seniors housing units at 285-297 Danforth Avenue, where the Danforth Baptist

Church has stood for nearly 100 years. WoodGreen is proposing a mass timber building that will essentially bisect the existing church, demolishing the middle section of the building while retaining the front façade and a rear portion of the building.

"The proposed development consists of an eight-storey

mass timber, prefabricated, modular building consisting of affordable and supportive rental housing for seniors," **City of Toronto** senior planner **Doris Ho** told *NRU*.

"A worship space and community space operated by the Danforth Church will also be incorporated into

the proposal. Portions of the existing church will be retained in the proposed development. This proposal is being supported through CMHC's (**Canada Mortgage and Housing Corporation**) Rapid Housing initiative."

The project received \$19.8 million in federal funding through the Rapid Housing Initiative, a federal capital fund designed to support the rapid construction of new housing and/or the acquisition of existing buildings for rehabilitation or conversion to permanent affordable housing.

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Photo of the Danforth Baptist Church at 285-297 Danforth Avenue. WoodGreen Community Services is proposing to retrofit the church in order to accommodate a mass timber residential building that would contain 50 affordable rental units for seniors. The proposed redevelopment of the site would retain the front façade of the building.

SOURCE: WOODGREEN COMMUNITY SERVICES

UPCOMING DATES

MARCH

27 CreateTO, 1:30 p.m.

29 – 31

Council, 9:30 a.m.

3 Etobicoke York Community Council, 9:30 a.m.

APRIL

4 North York Community Council, 9:30 a.m.

5 Scarborough Community Council, 9:30 a.m.

12 Toronto & East York Community Council, 9:30 a.m.

13 TTC Board, 10:00 a.m.

17 Board of Health, 9:30 a.m.

20 General Government Committee, 9:30 a.m.

24 Preservation Board, 9:30 a.m.
CreateTO, 2:00 p.m.

25 Economic & Community Development Committee, 9:30 a.m.

26 Infrastructure & Environment Committee, 9:30 a.m.

27 Planning & Housing Committee, 9:30 a.m.

MAY

2 Executive Committee, 9:30 a.m.

8 TTC Board, 10:00 a.m.

10-12 Council, 9:30 a.m.

15 Etobicoke York Community Council, 9:30 a.m.

16 North York Community Council, 9:30 a.m.

18 Scarborough Community Council, 9:30 a.m.

CHANGES TO COMMUNITY CONSULTATION PROCESS FOR HOUSING NOW AFFORDABLE HOUSING PROPOSED

CHANGING THE LANDSCAPE OF COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

Lana Hall

A new report from the City of Toronto's real estate management division proposes updates to City's community engagement process for its Housing Now affordable housing portfolio, which could help build more community support for these developments. But some affordable housing advocates worry that even with these proposed updates, community consultations for affordable housing are fundamentally flawed in the scope of the feedback they permit, and consequently, they can delay the creation of much-needed housing in Toronto.

The City of Toronto's Housing Now initiative, administered through its real estate management agency **CreateTO**, uses surplus City-owned land to help create affordable rental housing within larger

mixed-income developments in mixed-use, transit-oriented communities. Under the *Planning Act*, community consultations are required for proposed new developments, to inform community members, local councillors and other stakeholders about what is being proposed for a site and provide them with an opportunity to give feedback.

Community consultations for new developments are often contentious, particularly when they propose an element of affordable housing. When CreateTO posted a video recording of the community consultation for a proposed affordable housing project at a Housing Now site at 158 Borough Drive in 2021, they added a trigger warning. "This recording includes discriminatory and offensive language."

The CreateTO report calls for an updated community consultation strategy, with a strong emphasis on building local community support for affordable housing projects. The proposed updates to the consultation sessions include providing "clear communication that the purpose of the engagement is not about approval of the site," and ensuring that consultation leaders are "addressing misinformation and misunderstandings proactively, clearly and concisely," according to the report.

CreateTO director of communications and marketing **Susan O'Neill** told *NRU* the CreateTO program has been continually assessing its engagement approach in response to evolving conversations about Toronto's affordable housing,

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COMMUNITY CONSULTATIONS

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and that the revised approach places strong emphasis on relationship building.

“Local communities will be invited to join in planning for and welcoming Housing Now developments,” she says, “and engagement will focus on gathering feedback on how to successfully integrate Housing Now developments into local neighbourhoods.”

O’Neill confirmed that the city will continue to hold community consultation meetings for sites that require amendments to the zoning by-law, but notes that the meetings will form part of a “broader, multi-pronged strategy” to build support for Housing Now projects.

Affordable housing advocates believe efforts to build local community support for affordable and mixed-income developments are long overdue. **More Neighbours Toronto** (MNTO) founder **Eric Lombardi** questions whether prospective neighbours should be able to veto proposed affordable housing projects at all.

“I don’t think people who have secure housing should be objecting to secure housing for people who don’t currently have it,” Lombardi told *NRU*. He says the current process for community consultations is time-consuming and causes delays in the development

process, which can have consequences for timely construction of these projects.

“I think the engagement process should not be done on a site-by-site process. I think what the City should be doing is having engagement throughout the city about how to construct its CreateTO program,” he says. “If building affordable housing on its own properties is something the City wants to accomplish, they need to figure out how to get from idea to plan to execution faster, and having either fewer or no direct community consultations is the only way the city can achieve that with the market conditions.”

The proposed updates to CreateTO’s community engagement process come at a time when affordable housing projects simply cannot afford these delays. According to the City’s new Housing Data Hub, 19,756 affordable units have been approved since 2017, but 15,175 of those have yet to break ground. Factors like pandemic-related supply chain disruptions and rising interest rates put these at risk, and community interference does not help. After the community consultation for 158 Borough Drive in 2021, area residents filed an appeal through the **Ontario Land Tribunal** (OLT),

which delayed the project further. That development has yet to break ground.

HousingNowTO technical lead **Mark Richardson** does not think community consultations should be removed from the planning process, but he does think the City should limit what can be discussed.

“...We can talk about the streetscape, we can talk about the public realm, we can talk about Uber and delivery access, and those kinds of things,” he says, “but the height and the density of this building, and the number of units and the kinds of people who are living in it, [should not be] up for discussion.”

Richardson says these open-ended conversations are unfair to both those opposed and in support of affordable housing. He says residents’ opinions about the size and affordable housing mix of developments may not take into account the nuances of planning requirements, nor the economic viability of having more—or fewer—affordable housing units in a single development.

“All levels of government need to share those realities and those hard truths with taxpayers and residents,” he says. “Otherwise, we’re wasting our time having totally unrealistic conversations in some of these community consultations.”

Richardson points to the affordable modular housing project proposed in 2021 under the City’s Rapid Housing Initiative, which was eventu-

ally built on the site of a former parking lot in East York, after much local opposition. In the end, a Minister’s Zoning Order was issued by the Ministry of Municipal Affairs & Housing to fast-track permissions for the proposed development, and the affordable housing site welcomed residents in the Fall of 2022, less than a year after the project was proposed.

“I have no problem with people being able to raise concerns [about affordable housing developments]” says Richardson. “I do have a problem with people being able to put landmines down in front of a project because it doesn’t meet their ... personal preferences about who should or should not live in what they call ‘their’ neighbourhood.”

CreateTO will consider the proposed updates to its community engagement processes at its meeting on Monday, March 27.

Lana Hall wrote this story on assignment for NRU. 🌸

HARNESSING POTENTIAL

Matt Durnan

The City of Toronto is charting its course towards achieving or exceeding the provincial housing target of developing 285,000 new homes in the city by 2031 through the delivery of its Housing Action Plan (HAP) which identifies specific action items that City staff will focus on for this term of council.

At the City's executive committee meeting on March 21, chief planner **Gregg Lintern** presented the HAP priorities and a work plan, outlining a number of actions and initiatives to be undertaken between 2023 and 2026, including establishing aggressive timelines for approving and implementing a number of actions in the short term – 37 actions to be completed before the end of this year.

“What's really important is that council asked us for a work plan. There are a lot of housing initiatives in flight, and many that are additional. And given that it is such a complex series of regulatory and programming moves, I think it's important that it be provided in a transparent manner,” Lintern told *NRU*.

Action items in the Housing Action Plan that will begin this year and will continue over the course of the next three years

include the following: removing policy and zoning barriers to building housing; leveraging public lands to increase the housing supply; preserving existing rental homes; supporting the development of a range of purpose-built rental homes (including market and non-market) through new and strengthened housing policies and programs; and supporting the community sector—including non-profit and co-op housing providers—to modernize and grow their housing stock.

A number of key deliverables to advance the Housing Action Plan are on the immediate horizon and will be brought forward in March and April, including a recommendation to enable as-of-right zoning for multiplexes in all neighbourhoods city-wide (See: “*Accommodating More Housing Forms*”, *NRU Toronto, March 3, 2023*). The multiplex housing final report will be brought to planning and housing committee in April and council will be able to make a decision on the proposed multiplex policy as early as May.

“I think in this comprehensive report, there's a lot of space and attention to not just the housing crisis experienced by essential key workers and average workers in

the city, but also the necessary steps that we might need to take to deliver deeper levels of affordability,” Toronto Housing Secretariat executive director **Abi Bond** told *NRU*.

“You'll see that one of the upcoming actions is a community housing growth plan or program or policy to harness or explore opportunities on either co-op or non-profit sites that were created through public investment and programs in previous generations. We need to think about how we use that land and those partnerships more effectively moving forward to deliver levels of affordability that we might not otherwise be able to deliver on a straight-up planning approval process.”

Additional pieces to addressing the housing puzzle from a regulatory and guideline policy standpoint include looking at mid-rise housing performance standards that are in place to ensure that avenues develop in an appropriate and context-sensitive manner. The

performance standards are intended to provide simple, straightforward guidance for those seeking to develop mid-rise projects on the city's avenues.

“We're going to become more in tune with our report on how some of the mid-rise performance standards can be modified to support more mid-rise housing on our avenues,” Lintern said.

“We're also looking at all of our major streets, and I would bucket that out a little bit ... Some of them are already zoned. Some of our avenues are zoned and some are not, so we want to address that. Some of our major streets are kind of missing ‘teeth’ in the avenues—like there are little sections of neighbourhoods in the middle of a mixed-use area. We want to look at those. We also want to look at major roads in neighbourhoods. Maybe there is potential for more density and height along some of those major roads.”

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We're going to become more in tune with our report on how some of the mid-rise performance standards can be modified to support more mid-rise housing on our avenues.

- Gregg Lintern

HARNESSING POTENTIAL

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 4

Another deliverable short-term action item is a new publicly-accessible data dashboard to track affordable rental homes that are approved, under construction, and built, as well as homes that have been demolished and replaced through rental replacement policies (*See In Brief, page 10*).

HousingNowTO technical lead **Mark Richardson** deputed at the March 21 executive committee meeting, indicating that the volunteer organization welcomes the arrival of the Housing Action Plan, while it also encourages the City to amend the plan with a goal of exceeding the provincial housing target of 285,000 new homes in the next 10 years, and adding an explicit target that ensures that at least 20 per cent (57,000) of those new homes are created within the affordable and workforce housing rental types.

“The City needs to be focusing its resources on things that have high housing potential [defined as yielding 25,000 housing units or more according to the City’s scale]. Anything that is identified as high potential, you need to be executing on as many of those as you can,” Richardson told *NRU*, while explaining that the City’s defined range for medium potential may be too broad as it

currently stands.

Housing Action Plan work plan items that project the creation of fewer than 5,000 housing units are identified as having low housing potential, while items that could enable the development of between 5,000 and 25,000 units are identified in the Housing Action Plan as having medium housing potential.

Richardson says he would like to see that range for medium reduced to a range of closer to 5,000 to 10,000 units, with anything enabling more than 10,000 housing units classified as having high housing potential.

“We are concerned that the housing potential for Villiers Island and Quayside, which are managed by **Waterfront Toronto**, are only tagged [in the HAP] as medium,” Richardson said during his deputation.

“These are prime land locations that the City owns within a short transit trip to our city central business district. Staff must be instructed to do more than medium housing [potential] on those sites.”

Additional key deliverables planned for the short term include a recommendation to council in March to establish a new council advisory body to support the city in advancing its commitment to the progressive

realization of the right to adequate housing, as set out in the Toronto Housing Charter, and the release of the first version of the “Toronto Data Book” which will provide an overview of housing indicators that impact the health of the city’s housing ecosystem, including availability and affordability of appropriate homes to meet the needs of current and future residents.

When it comes to addressing the city’s housing crisis and the housing affordability crisis, **Toronto Metropolitan University** executive director of city building research and innovation **Cherise Burda** believes that the City is doing what it can with the tools at its disposal, but more is needed from upper levels of government.

“We have two issues, which are housing supply and housing affordability. And they’re not all going to be addressed effectively and comprehensively in this plan. I think that [City of Toronto] is pulling out all of the things that the municipality can actually do, but they’re dealing with the reality of provincial policy like Bill 23, that has reduced the revenue necessary

to build affordable housing,” Burda told *NRU*.

“I think they’re doing the right things of moving up the chain of missing middle programs they’ve been unrolling, from laneway and garden suites, to now rolling out their multiplex policies, and these are all important things. I think our challenge really is how to yield affordable housing, because as we know, the City doesn’t have a lot of revenue tools and affordable housing was downloaded from the federal government to the Province to the City.”

Burda echoed some of the sentiment expressed by the **Regional Planning Commissioners of Ontario** in their recent report outlining the housing inventory pipeline and how municipalities have been taking it on the chin when it comes to pressures to create more housing and more affordable housing (*See: “In Search of a Bigger Picture”, Novae Res Urbis GTHA, March 22*).

“It’s like all the fingers are pointing at the municipalities. And they’re changing zoning, they’ve done their approvals. And it feels like all the fingers

CONTINUED PAGE 6

These are prime land locations that the City owns within a short transit trip to our city central business district. Staff must be instructed to do more than medium housing [potential] on those sites.

- Mark Richardson

HARNESSING POTENTIAL

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are pointing at the municipality and it can only do so much,” Burda said.

“I know the federal government has come out with their housing accelerator fund (See: *Accelerating New Housing Development, NRU GTHA, March 22*) which is to invest in municipalities creating plans to build more housing supply, but it’s like, why don’t you just build housing? It’s more swishing around money into programs and plans but not actually building more housing. The federal government needs to do more to directly invest in building more housing.”

Toronto is not alone in its concern about the far-reaching impacts that Bill 23 may have when it comes to the ability for the municipality to generate revenue, and while the Province has told municipalities that “they will be made whole”, it

remains to be seen what that will actually look like.

“We need to table that concern with the provincial government. They’ve indicated that they will make us whole. We’ve identified two major factors: one is the affordable housing funding that comes from development charges. [First] our need to plan over the long-term for that to be a sustainable funding measure,” Lintern said.


“The second part is more about the community—the other kinds of community infrastructure— whether it be pipes in the ground, or transit, or state of good repair of roads, and the expansion that comes with growth—whether it be parks, community centres, libraries. Development charges or some other funding tool is needed. We don’t want to wake up in 20 years having built

the housing, but having a city that doesn’t exist around the housing.”

The Housing Action Plan has been very intentionally front-loaded with 37 of the 54 action items planned to be undertaken this year.

“That front loading is what is speaking to the degree of urgency, and what we’re feeling as professionals, and likely in our personal lives as well. This is a challenge that touches everybody’s household right now,” said Bond.

“This plan is our best thinking about how to harness the full housing continuum to have an impact on the health of the entire sector. This is one of the most difficult challenges

that we as a city are facing, with the least number of tools to address it. So this is really us thinking about what we can do, what can we really drive forward to have an impact and it’s very purposefully front loaded.” 



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SURGICAL RETROFIT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 1

CMHC has earmarked \$1.5 billion for the Rapid Housing Initiative, with \$1 billion slated for projects for provinces, territories, municipalities, Indigenous governing bodies and organizations, and non-profit organizations. The remaining \$500 million is slated to be distributed among 41 pre-determined municipalities.

WoodGreen prides itself on its desire to find new and innovative models for creating more affordable housing units, and the Danforth Avenue project certainly fits that bill. At the same time, this project will maintain the existing character of the neighbourhood and streetscape by retaining most of the exterior façades of the existing church building on the site.

“I think the one thing here is that WoodGreen is looking at piloting a number of different projects to see what is the best way that you can provide affordable housing, not just for seniors but for any sort of Toronto population that we’re looking at,” WoodGreen Foundation executive director **Teresa Vasilopoulos** told *NRU*.

“This one we’re interested in because of the tall timber, and it’s environmentally and energy efficient. The big thing is the accelerated timelines that

were able to be put in place on this particular site. We’ve also looked at other modular opportunities, and we had

a building that the City did that we’re just taking over at Cedarbrae. There’s a number of different ones that WoodGreen is working through to see what’s the best and most cost-effective to be able to provide the highest quality of housing available.”

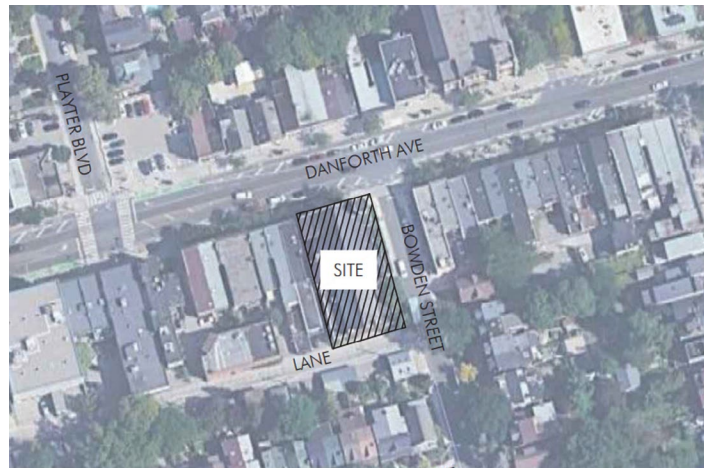
Prefabricated and mass timber home builder **R-Hauz**

has been brought on board for the project’s construction and is welcoming the challenge of not only bringing more housing to the neighbourhood, but of being sensitive to the existing character of the area and maintaining a key element of the heritage of the site by preserving the exterior form of the nearly century-old church it accommodates.

“The rationale is ‘How do you build a new building sensitively and keep the heritage structure without too much being tossed or knocking everything over?’ This is a site that has heritage interest, and the plan was keeping the most important heritage aspects and sensitively carving the rest out,” R-Hauz principal and co-founder **Leith Moore** told *NRU*.

“These are what we call ‘2D panelized modular’, as opposed to complete boxes that you pile up. The 2D allows

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Map showing a site at 285-297 Danforth Avenue. The site is currently occupied by the Danforth Baptist Church, which is proposed for partial demolition to accommodate an eight-storey mass timber building that would accommodate 50 affordable rental dwelling units for seniors.

SOURCE: CITY OF TORONTO

Image of the Danforth Baptist Church. The areas of the existing church building shaded red would be removed in order to accommodate an eight-storey mass timber seniors’ residential building. The areas outlined with white dash marks would be retained.

ARCHITECT: CMV GROUP ARCHITECTS

SURGICAL RETROFIT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 7

you to do very quick two-storey sections of walls that are already clad, and you basically gently drop them down on your prepared slab. And so it's faster and gentler around those structures. The idea of being more surgical about how you build among older heritage pieces is something that our panelized design allows us to do."

The front façade of the Danforth Baptist Church will be retained and the entrance from Danforth Avenue will serve as an entryway into the proposed housing development, occupying the space where the bulk of the church currently stands.

In recent years, the church's congregation has been steadily dwindling and the under-utilized site presents a great opportunity to add some much-needed affordable seniors' housing to the neighbourhood, while retaining parts of the church that will still be open for use by members of its congregation.

Danforth Avenue is a well-established street in Toronto and is well-known across the city for its unique main street culture and a mix of building types occupied by a vast array of businesses from restaurants, to salons, to clothing stores, to coffee shops and more.

"The urban design guidelines we were really considering were how to integrate more density in a mid-rise building on the Danforth while respecting the existing character along the main street, as well as the neighbourhoods behind," **Gladki Planning Associates**

planner **Natalie Barcellos** told *NRU*.

"Parts of the church façade are being retained, and it allows for a lot of the preservation of the pedestrian experience and for that to remain the same without substantial changes."

The Danforth Baptist Church is neither designated nor listed on the City of Toronto heritage register. The property was identified by the Danforth Avenue Cultural Heritage Resource Assessment as one of 231 properties with

potential cultural heritage significance, however, the site was removed from that list during a Toronto and East York community council meeting on June 29, 2022.

A 302 square-metre landscaped courtyard is proposed for the site at the rear of the property, while the interior of the building would include non-residential and community space on the ground floor that would be operated by the church. The development also includes

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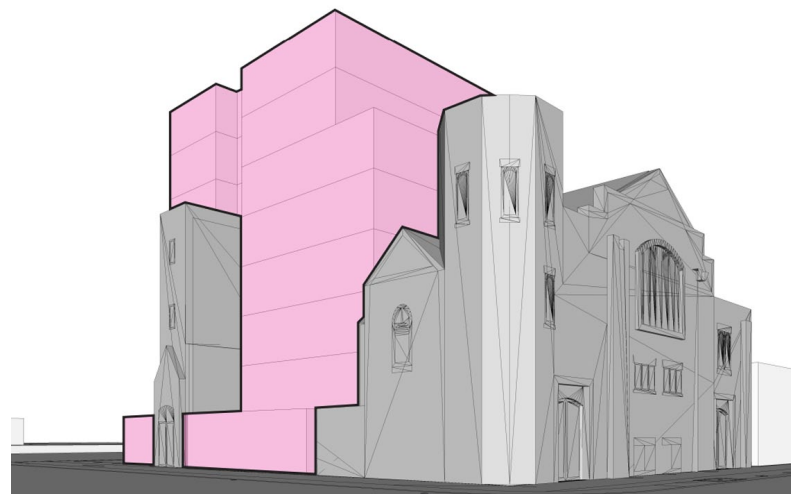


Illustration looking west across Bowden Street. The front and rear sections of the Danforth Baptist Church would be retained and an eight-storey mass timber building accommodating 50 affordable rental dwelling units for seniors would be constructed in between the two retained sections of the existing church building.

ARCHITECT: CMV GROUP ARCHITECTS

3D massing diagram with a view looking southwest from Danforth Avenue at the proposed redevelopment of the Danforth Baptist Church at 285-297 Danforth Avenue. The pink shaded area of the illustrated structure shows the proposed eight-storey mass timber residential building that would be built behind the existing façade of the church, which would be retained through the redevelopment, along with portions of the Bowden Street façade. The retained elements of the existing structure appear in grey.

SOURCE: R-HAUZ
ARCHITECT: MCCALLUM SATHER

SURGICAL RETROFIT

CONTINUED FROM PAGE 8

community dining space, counselling space and a modernized worship space, all of which reflect the church's current and future functional, financial and theological needs.

The unit breakdown of the 50 affordable rental units for the project is broken down into two types, with 32 studio dwelling units to be made available to residents with a higher degree of independence, and two nine-unit dwelling clusters that will have 24-hour staff support for residents

needing care services and meal preparation.

"Toronto is in the middle of a housing crisis, and seniors, I think, face additional challenges because of their aging, so there is a higher demand for social housing for seniors. And I would say about one third of the applicants on the City's social housing waitlist are seniors," Vasilopoulos said.

"WoodGreen is trying to find solutions for a lot of these seniors that want to remain in the community. And instead of

them ending up in a hospital or long-term care facility, this is an opportunity for them to have their own unit and be able to live in the community safely and with dignity, and have 24-hour supports if needed." 🌱

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IN BRIEF

City launches new housing data hub

The **City of Toronto** has launched a new Housing Data Hub as part of its new Housing Action Plan 2022 – 2026. The Hub is a part of the City's efforts to realize one of the plan's goals of making housing-related data in the city more accessible to the public. By tracking the City's progress on creating more housing in Toronto, the data hub aims to improve accountability and transparency around accomplishing the provincial

targets of getting 285,000 new homes built in Toronto within the next ten years and the Housing TO action plan goal of approving 40,000 new affordable rental homes by 2030.

The Housing Data Hub will publish key data pertaining to the City's social and affordable housing portfolios, including:

- Tracking how many homes in the City's affordable housing rental pipeline are approved, under construction, and completed
- Providing details on rental

units that have been demolished and replaced

- Showing the City's existing social housing stock and up-to-date data on its centralized waiting list for social housing
- Posting maps showing at what stage of the development pipeline affordable rental projects are, as well as where social housing buildings are located in the city
- Releasing an annual Toronto Housing Data Book

Housing data will be

presented and updated regularly on the Hub on the City's website in the form of online dashboards. The Toronto Housing Data Book will be published annually, assessing the health of Toronto's housing system by bringing together City of Toronto housing data with key indicators from external sources including **Statistics Canada** and the **Canada Mortgage & Housing Corporation (CMHC)**.

To learn more about and use this new City of Toronto resource, please visit the City's website [here](#). 🌱

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TLAB NEWS

BLACK CREEK BUSINESS AREA VARIANCES DENIED

In a March 15 decision, TLAB member **Gerald Swinkin** dismissed an appeal by **Urros Investments Inc.** against the **City of Toronto** Committee of Adjustment's (COA) refusal of its minor variance application for 110 Industry Street.

Urros sought variances to legalize the existing use of the property for outdoor storage on a temporary (five-year) basis. The zoning by-law does not allow this use. Neighbouring landowner **Bergler Development Corp.**, whose tenant on the neighbouring property is a packaging manufacturer for the food industry, appeared in opposition to the variances.

The TLAB heard evidence from planner **David Riley (SGL Planning & Design)** on behalf of Urros and from planner **Martin Rendl (Martin Rendl Associates)** on behalf of Bergler Development Corp. Both gave competing opinion evidence pertaining to whether or not the outdoor storage use should be permitted on the site, which is designated *Core Employment Areas* in the Official Plan and is zoned *Prestige Employment* in the applicable zoning by-law.

The TLAB found that "Introducing a use which is not permitted by the terms of the by-law does not represent a variance. It constitutes

an amendment to the By-law" which is outside of the jurisdiction of both the COA and the TLAB to approve. Finding that the requested variances failed to meet the four tests under the *Planning Act*, the TLAB denied the appeal.

Solicitors involved in this decision were **Jamie Cole** and **Michael Foderick (McCarthy Tétrault)** representing Urros Investments Inc. and **David Neligan** and **Naomi Mares (Aird & Berlis)** representing Bergler Development Corp.

WILLOWDALE CONSENT AND VARIANCES APPROVED

In a March 13 decision, TLAB member **Stanley Makuch** allowed appeals by **Sina Souresrafil** against the **City of Toronto** Committee of Adjustment's refusal of her consent and minor variance applications for 171 Elmwood Avenue.

Souresrafil proposes to sever the Elmwood Avenue property into two lots and to construct one single-detached dwelling on each lot. The new lots would have frontages of 9.14 metres and lot areas of 366 square metres. The City of Toronto attended the hearing in opposition to the appeals.

Planning evidence was provided by **Franco Romano (Action Planning Consultants)** on behalf of Souresrafil, and by **Michael**

Romero on behalf of the City of Toronto.

Romano testified that the surrounding neighbourhood context includes a mixture of lot frontages and that the proposed severed lots would not stand out as being undersized. Romero, in contrast, testified that the proposed lot frontage, size, and sideyard setbacks fail to respect and reinforce the existing physical character of the neighbourhood.

The TLAB agreed with Romano's evidence that, while relatively small, the proposed lots would be similar enough to other existing lots on the block that they would respect and reinforce the character of the area. In light of its findings that the applications satisfy the applicable criteria, the TLAB allowed the appeals, granting the consent and variances subject to conditions.

Solicitors involved in this decision were **Amber Stewart (Amber Stewart Law)** representing Sina Souresrafil and **Marc Hardiejowski** and **Ultra Gautam** representing the City of Toronto. 🌸

Erratum

In the March 17 edition of *NRU Toronto*, the story "Reinventing the Arts & Culture Ecosystem" should have identified TO Live's president and CEO as Clyde Wagner. *NRU* regrets the error.

OLT NEWS

SETTLEMENT APPROVED FOR VAUGHAN-ST. CLAIR MID-RISE DEVELOPMENT

In a March 10 decision, OLT member **Bita Rajae** allowed appeals, in part, by **Block (Vaughan Road Developments Limited)** against the refusal of the **City of Toronto** of its minor variance application and failure of the City to render a decision on its site plan control application for 129-141 Vaughan Road.

The Vaughan Road site is an assembly of six properties, with current as-of-right development potential of up to eight storeys. Block proposes a 15-storey mixed-use development containing a small at-grade retail unit fronting onto Vaughan Road and 153 residential units above. The development would provide right-of-way widenings of 2.68 metres along Vaughan Road, and 1.98 metres along the rear laneway, with a privately-owned publicly-accessible space proposed to connect Vaughan Road to the laneway along the

south edge of the building at grade.

The Tribunal was advised that the parties had reached a settlement of the appeals, and proceeded to hear evidence from Block's land use planner **David Morse (Bousfields)**, in support of the settlement. He outlined changes made to the proposed development following the Committee of Adjustment decision, as well as providing an overview of the 19- requested minor variances required to implement the settlement agreement.

Morse opined that the proposed development appropriately implements the site's *Apartment Neighbourhoods* land use designation and represents a transit-supportive land use within the St. Clair West Protected Major Transit Station Area.

Several neighbours attended the hearing to convey concerns relating to noise and vibration from construction, as well as pedestrian safety. The Tribunal found that such concerns could be addressed through a construction management plan

and other notice of approval conditions secured through the site plan approval.

The Tribunal adopted Morse's unchallenged planning evidence in support of the proposal and allowed the appeals, in part.

Solicitors involved in this decision were **Sidonia Tomasella** and **Naomi Mares (Aird & Berlis)** representing Block (Vaughan Road) Developments Limited and **Marc Hardiejowski** representing the City of Toronto. [See *OLT Case No. OLT-22-003886.*]

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PEOPLE

The **YMCA of Greater Toronto** has named **Lesley Davidson** its new president and chief executive officer (CEO), effective July 8, 2023. Davidson has been working for the YMCA in a series of increasingly responsible roles since 1996. Currently, she is the organization's chief operating officer (COO). Davidson will replace outgoing YMCA president and CEO **Medhat Mahdy**, who has served in that position for over 13 years.