



October 3, 2019

Dear Cabbagetown Residents and Businesses,

Residents in Cabbagetown have been upset to learn that the City of Toronto is relocating the Adelaide Resource Centre for Women's drop-in program to 233 Carlton Street from 67 Adelaide Street. This concern is based on their being blindsided by the news in the context of the serious health and safety issues confronting our downtown east communities - South Cabbagetown in particular. I share in this concern, as this news reflects a series of process failures and is damaging to the relationship between the City and residents of this community.

I was also deeply disappointed to read a note from staff indicating that I had made no objections. This is not true, as there was never an option to refuse the plan and staff were operating under delegated authority that circumvented local Councillor approval. When I was briefed on the proposal, I explained the concerns of the neighbourhood to staff. These are the issues that the community is deeply familiar with. The area already hosts a large number of community service agencies and organizations that incompletely address the complex mental health, addictions, and housing needs of a large vulnerable population. Not enough has been done to resource the community and resolve the ongoing health and safety challenges that confront it. We are making progress, but there is still a long ways to go.

In light of all of these concerns and immediate issues, I asked SSHA staff to take the lead in addressing all the issue I had flagged and to proactively engage with the neighbourhood to work through and resolve them. Clearly these plans were advanced without the requested consultation and the now public documents show that this has gone much too far without any public engagement. Even my office had not been told that we could discuss the plans openly, let alone that details would be published online without advanced notice.

The City has lost a great deal of trust in the last 48 hours and this is bad for everyone. The Adelaide Resource Centre for Women is an excellent and necessary service. It has operated on Adelaide Street with little to no concern about their operations or any safety concerns regarding those whom they serve. Now it is receiving the highest level of scrutiny, on top of moving into an area with significant challenges. That the City has not been able to appropriately consult with the community and bring you into this conversation in a transparent and meaningful way, even in these earliest stages, is deeply alarming. I am asking senior staff to put the plans for 233 Carlton on hold until the community can be properly engaged, trust is rebuilt, and we can chart a path forward together.



Kristyn Wong-Tam
City Councillor
Ward 13, Toronto Centre