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Dear Neighbour!

**Happy Spring and Mother's Day Weekend!** This weekend we celebrate the incredible moms and mother figures who have sown into our lives. I especially want to shout out to all the single moms for whom raising a family in such an expensive city is nothing short of heroic. Many thanks to **NeighbourLink North York** for continuing the tradition of celebrating single moms in our community with a special event tomorrow.

This past week was intensely busy with council prep and the marathon City Council meetings taking up most of my time. The days prior to the meeting were filled with conversations with fellow councillors as I shared my ideas and learned more about their issues of concern. I am grateful to work alongside a collegial group of councillors from whom I have received a tremendous amount of support. I am particularly grateful for **Councillor Amber Morley** for a birthday cake and birthday greeting during council that made me feel like we are a team - and even sometimes family. Also grateful for **Councillor Bravo** and **Councillor Malik** whose votes allowed me to speak on an issue, even though it meant I was speaking out against their position. This was a deeply humbling moment for me. Democracy is beautiful in the relationships we are building and the difficult issues we are wrestling through together.

Another tradition I have enjoyed is lunch with all the female councillors on the second day of council. We currently have 10 female councillors and dream of one day reaching parity. These luncheons are a time for us to connect and share encouragement, food and camaraderie so we don't only see each other through the lens of the issues we are fighting for.

Here are some highlights of decisions that were made during this week's City Council. You can click on the titles to read the official reports and motions.

**UrbanHensTO:** Urban farming has gained greater traction during the pandemic and continued with the rising cost of food. Since 2018, the City of Toronto ran a successful pilot of a Backyard Hens program that was potentially going to be expanded until the risk of Avian Flu arose. This council meeting city staff were recommending a complete shut down of the program. This is in stark contrast to Orillia which just launched a permanent program last month after a 6-year pilot. New York City has a longstanding backyard hen program that takes complaints on noise, odor, vermin very seriously which can result in fines up to \$2000. I was concerned we are prematurely shutting down something many families may want to experience. We do not know what awaits us in the future, but given the current rising cost of food and global instability, certainly growing our capacity to farm in our urban context should be considered. Hence I moved a motion for us to pause our pilot and reexamine when the risk of Avian flu abates while we examine municipalities that have moved forward with backyard hen programs.

**Multiplex EHON:** Late last year the province passed new legislation allowing for triplexes to replace single family housing. Yesterday, Toronto City Council passed "Expanding Housing Options in Neighbourhoods" allowing for multiplexes of 4 units to be built across the city. I am concerned about the pressure this will create on our community infrastructure especially local schools which are already maxed out. I amended the motion to include a consultation with the TDSB and TCDSB along with a threshold of 200 permit applications to report back if it is reached before 2026. We must proceed cautiously and track impact on our communities.

**Toronto Hydro's CLIMATE Advisory Services:** This week at Council meeting we received a report on Toronto Hydro's Climate Advisory Services. Open Government and principles of transparency, participation, accountability, and accessibility are woven throughout my work as councillor. I amended the motion to direct our Environment and Climate Division to work with Toronto Hydro to develop a reporting dashboard to provide information on climate action and progress to residents and businesses.

**Willowdale Manor AODA:** A few weeks ago some of the seniors from 175 Cummer approached me with floorplans they were having a hard time understanding. It turned out that due to AODA (Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act), renovations are happening across the city to ensure all of our city spaces are compliant with legislation by 2025 as required by the provincial government. As a result, the stage and front seating area that are beloved by the seniors at 175 Cummer are slated for removal. I was surprised to see such important amenities being sacrificed. As such, I moved a motion for the city to pause renovation plans and find alternatives. Many schools use mobile ramps or electric lifts to ensure accessibility for stages. I also think a front soft seating area is an important piece of infrastructure for seniors to have a place to sit to wait for WheelTrans or see the comings and goings of their neighbours. The new design left two benches placed between brick pillars in replacement of an entire lounge. We must do better for our seniors by listening to their needs and respecting their voices. I look forward to working with the city towards developing alternatives that can meet the needs of our seniors.

**Customer Service at the City of Toronto**  
Our City has taken tremendous strides in improving our customer service with multiple portals where you can log in your needs and complaints including the web portal, Twitter, 311 phone calls and even texting! [Click Here](#) to read the report that was submitted. You will see that 75% of our service requests are still made by phone. But did you know that we could save a lot of tax money and your time if we used alternative pathways. We are grateful for this division and the hard work they have done to modernize our service delivery. In light of this report, I moved two motions:

- Better serve the vulnerable.** We have heard it is difficult for the unhoused, who may not have digital devices to know when warming centres are open or how to find a shelter. I requested this division to look at how we can better serve the most vulnerable so that they too can access city services. One avenue to consider is having kiosks similar to the Service Ontario model.
- Re-frame how we serve our city.** When I was little, I read a book called "Anne of Green Gables," where the gossipy woman named Mrs. Lynde described her weekly activities as "going to church and going to a weekly Liberal party meeting." (This is not an endorsement of the Liberal Party). What struck me there was a time when people's lives were shaped by their participation in their faith and civic activity. I am uncomfortable with the word "customer" to describe our residents because it puts us in a consumer mindset. Yes, the city should provide good, reliable service - but the city also needs us all to participate for better outcomes. Participation means joining committees, volunteering, staying engaged and sending me feedback as issues come up in the city. So, I made a motion for the division to explore how we might use a resident engagement lens in replacement of a customer service lens.

**Drinking in Parks**  
A passionate debate ensued during council about piloting drinking in parks. The city will be creating a framework for a pilot and our community will have a chance to decide how we engage. I look forward to hearing your thoughts on this matter in the months to come.

It's going to be a wonderful weekend for gardening and bike riding or whatever outdoor activities bring you joy. If you have some time you can visit the **Spring Bazaar at the Danish Lutheran Church of Toronto at 72 Finch Ave. W** tomorrow (Saturday) from 10am-2:30pm. You will be able to purchase plenty of Danish goodies including hotdogs served with Danish Ketchup, Mustard and Remoulade. [Click Here](#) for details.

Have a wonderful weekend!

Warmest regards,

Lily Cheng 陳伶俐

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Scroll down to find out more about:

- ~ COUNCILLOR UPDATES
  - Willowdale Virtual Bike Share Community Consultation
  - Community Consultation - 6355 Yonge St

- ~ CITY OF TORONTO UPDATES
  - Key Information for By-Election for Mayor
  - Hiring: Election Officials
  - Pothole Repair Blitz
  - May is Museum Month
  - Newcomer Day - May 25
  - Doors Open Toronto - May 27-28

- ~ COMMUNITY EVENTS ACROSS WILLOWDALE
  - See below

Thank you for subscribing to our weekly e-newsletter! Invite your friends and family to sign up at [lilycheng.ca](http://lilycheng.ca). Please also send us any updates of local community news and events that we can share.

COUNCILLOR UPDATES

TUE, MAY 16, 7:30 PM - 8:30 PM ONLINE

**WILLOWDALE VIRTUAL BIKE SHARE**

Hosted by: **Councillor Lily Cheng**

Cai de Ridder, Senior Planner, Bike Share Toronto, will be presenting the Bike Share program and its plans for expansion into Willowdale.

Register Now!

**City of Toronto Planning COMMUNITY CONSULTATION**

Mon May 29th From 6:30-8:00  
6355 Yonge Street

Hosted by: Michael Romero, Planner, City of Toronto  
Guest: Councillor Lily Cheng

The proposed development seeks to demolish the existing building and redevelop the site with a 50-storey residential mixed-use building with a 7-storey base building and a 43-storey tower element.

Approximately 228 square metres of retail use is proposed at grade and 37,183 square metres of residential uses are proposed. The proposed building will include 610 new dwelling units in a mix of studio, one-bedroom, two-bedroom, and three-bedroom units. The proposal also includes 478 bicycle parking and storage spaces, and 102 vehicular parking spaces underground.

The consultation will be online and the link for the WebEx invitation will be provided shortly.

Register Here

CITY OF TORONTO UPDATES

BY-ELECTION FOR MAYOR

- KEY DATES
- Nominations closed Friday, May 12 at 2 p.m.
  - Advance voting will take place **Thursday, June 8 to Tuesday, June 13**
  - By-election will be held **Monday, June 26**

**CHECK YOUR VOTERS' LIST**  
ELECTORAL VOTERS can confirm their are on the voters' list and add or update their information for Toronto's 2023 by-election for mayor. To appear on the final voters' list, all revisions must be submitted to Toronto Elections by Friday, May 26.

Residents can check if they are on the voters' list by visiting [Toronto Elections MyVote](#) or calling 311.

Voter information cards will be mailed to eligible voters on the voters' list starting Tuesday, May 23. The cards provide information about when and where to vote either during the advance vote or on election day.

**APPLY TO VOTE BY MAIL**  
ELIGIBLE voters can choose an alternative to in-person voting for Toronto's 2023 by-election for mayor and can apply to vote by mail until **May 26 at 4:30 p.m.**

Interested voters must apply to vote online by visiting the [Toronto Elections Vote by Mail webpage](#) or by calling Toronto Elections at 416-338-1111 and pressing 5.

Once a mail-in voting application is processed, packages will be mailed to voters starting May 23. Applicants can track the status of their package using the confirmation code generated after completing their online application.

More information about mail-in voting and how to apply is available on the [Toronto Elections Vote by Mail webpage](#).

- RESOURCES: KEY INFORMATION
- English
  - Simplified Chinese
  - Traditional Chinese
  - Korean
  - Persian (Farsi)

MORE INFORMATION about Toronto's 2023 by-election for mayor is available on the Toronto Elections webpage: [www.toronto.ca/byelection](http://www.toronto.ca/byelection).

HIRING: ELECTION OFFICIALS

You can apply to work as an election official in the upcoming by-election if you are at least 18 years of age and eligible to work in Canada. Multilingual applicants are encouraged. [Learn more and apply today!](#)

POTHOLE REPAIR BLITZ

Sat, May 13, 6 AM-6 PM

Weather permitting, the City of Toronto will launch a pothole repair blitz today to keep Toronto's expressways, major roads and neighbourhood streets in a state of good repair. City crews will work a 12-hour shift to repair as many potholes as possible.

MUSEUM MONTH

May is Museum Month in Toronto! Now is the time to visit any of the City's 10 Toronto History Museums and celebrate the important contributions these cultural hubs make to our city. Check out what Toronto History Museums are up to on the City's [Exhibits & Events](#) webpage.

TORONTO NEWCOMER DAY

Time/Date: May 25, 2023, 10 AM - 3 PM

Location: Nathan Phillips Square

Toronto Newcomer Day is an annual event that welcomes newcomers to Toronto, helps them understand and access a range of services and celebrates their contributions to the city. The event features a number of activities, including a formal stage program, newcomer marketplace, Historic TO neighbourhood walking tours, an information fair and more. [Learn more.](#)

DOORS OPEN TORONTO

Doors Open Toronto, the free weekend-long celebration of architecture and public space is taking place **May 27 and May 28** and will feature more than 150 sites of exploration, a talk series, walking tours and more. [Learn more](#) and have fun!

COMMUNITY EVENTS ACROSS WILLOWDALE

- Upcoming community events:
- North York Historical Society Presents All Caps
  - 32 Division Community BBQ
  - Library Book/Democracy Discussion: Tearing It Down: By-elections and Municipal Reform with Dave Meslin (I'm excited to be a special guest!)
  - Conversation on Mayoral Election by Willowdale Community Legal Services

Learn More about Details!

Let's Connect on Social



If this email was forwarded to you and you'd like to sign up for future newsletters, you can do so at [www.lilycheng.ca](http://www.lilycheng.ca).

MISS A NEWSLETTER? ACCESS PAST ISSUES [HERE](#)

Building a Connected Community in Willowdale.