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Hi Neighbour!

It is with a huge sigh of relief that I write this letter after 3 days of meetings at City Council including a 13-hour marathon on Thursday. I am grateful the weekend is upon us and hope to see some of you at the [Holiday Fair in the Square at Mel Lastman Square](#) in support of Epilepsy Toronto. Hint! It's a great place to get some unique gifts for friends and family.

Task Force for Yonge/Finch Station (see photo below)

We have received several communications about concerns regarding the Yonge/Finch station. We have also seen multiple threads on reddit including a letter addressed to my office. This week, we convened an urgent meeting with key stakeholders to discuss how we can move forward.

This meeting gathered representatives from Streets to Homes, TTC, 32 Division, Toronto Police Service, Special Advisor for Social Development, as well as a representative from Councillor Myers (chair of TTC Board).

The discussions centered on understanding gaps and continued challenges concerning the illegal activities and unsanitary conditions in the station, and strategizing on a holistic approach that is based on collected data of needs to be addressed. Finch Station will be closely monitored collectively by TPS foot patrol, TTC special constables, and Streets To Homes in an effort to curb unsafe activities from occurring and attend to needs of the unhoused seeking refuge within the station. We all share in a commitment to ensure the well-being of all who frequent Finch Station.

We need your support! Sharing information with the TTC and police is key to ensuring we send the right resources to this situation. Please report any incidents on [Safe TTC app](#) or to TPS non-emergency line at [416-808-2222](tel:416-808-2222) (911 if it is an emergency) to alert the appropriate authorities. This also helps with creating data that will ensure adequate and appropriate resources are deployed.

All members of the taskforce acknowledge that these challenges will not disappear overnight. Instead, we will be convening regular meetings as a task force to monitor the situation and send appropriate resources. Please feel free to reach out to us to update my office of any situations that arise.

Monday: Civic Appointments

I spent Monday chairing the Civic Appointments Committee where we interviewed 25 candidates to choose 11 who will form the first **Housing Rights Advisory Committee** that has been established to ensure the interests of those who are precariously housed or facing homelessness and discrimination are reflected in our housing policy. Our interviews included vulnerable members of the community. As such, I am grateful we were able to provide a very approachable interview experience which included setting up a table with a tablecloth, small vase with flowers and a bowl of oranges that hopefully helped our prospective candidates feel welcome. This is certainly much better than where interviews typically happen at a formal committee table that includes computer screens and microphones. Moving forward, we may create a similar environment for all interviews as we want to ensure those who join our boards and committees reflect the diversity of our city.

Tuesday: Whirlwind of Activity

My office was a flurry of activity in preparation for council. This included preparing amendments for motions, preparing our response for Cummer Station (yes, it came back to council).

TOLive Board Meeting

We are proud to have the **Meridian Arts Centre** in the heart of our neighbourhood. I would like to see the space used by more community groups and have programming that engages our community. Serving on the board gives me the opportunity to have direct communications with the teams that are programming this beautiful arts space. I look forward to working with the board to strengthen arts programming available in our neighbourhood. 2 highlights from the board meeting:

1. I was elected as Vice-Chair of the board.
2. TOLive is piloting a **2-week summer camp in our neighbourhood** this coming summer! I will share details once they are available.

Wednesday: Solidified the New Deal

The first day of council was incredibly slow. Out of over 200 items, we only got through 1.5 items. Such is the pace of debate and democracy! We sealed the **New Deal** with the Province of Ontario. I made a speech that this new deal is a **great appetizer**, but we must keep in mind that we need a **'main dish' New Deal** - which should include long term sustainable revenue tools for a city that is larger and more complex than many provinces.

Renaming Yonge/Dundas Square

For many months the renaming of Dundas Street has been a hot topic because of the potential cost and contested understanding of the history of Henry Dundas. Councillor Moise moved a motion to pause the plan on Dundas St. and instead, rename some key city assets for which funding was already identified or being offered. The Confronting Anti-Black Racism Advisory Committee has spent 18 months along with the Yonge/Dundas Square Board and other stakeholders.

They landed on renaming Yonge/Dundas Square, Yonge Dundas Station, Dundas West Station and Jane/Dundas library. The cost of this is considerably lower with only \$700K additional monies required, compared to the \$13 million that would have been spent to rename the entire street. The new name of Yonge/Dundas Square will be **Sankofa Square**, a Ghanian word that means looking back to move forward. TMU has offered to pay for the cost of renaming Yonge/Dundas Station to TMU station. This decision was referred to the TTC Board to make a final decision. Dundas West Station and Jane/Dundas Library will embark on their own renaming processes.

Thursday: Cummer Station

Late Thursday evening, Council unanimously adopted my [motion](#) to amend EX10.16 to forward a joint letter signed by the mayor, a selection of deputy mayors and councillors, and community organizations to Premier Ford, the ministers of Infrastructure and Transportation and Minister Stan Cho, our own Willowdale MPP. The letter requests the Province of Ontario fully fund Cummer Station and sets out the [Case for Cummer Station](#). My team worked hard to get all these signatures!

I was exhausted after being in the meeting for 12 hours - but managed to rally my energy for a late night speech about the importance of Cummer. Here is the motion:

1. City Council forward Attachment 1 of the report (November 21, 2023) from the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, and the Executive Director, Transit Expansion to the Province of Ontario and request the Province to reconsider funding the delivery of Cummer Station as part of the Yonge North Subway Extension project.

2. City Council request the Province of Ontario to:

- a. formally respond to "The Case For Cummer Station" (November 2023) prepared by Toronto's Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning, and the Executive Director, Transit Expansion;
- b. include Cummer Station in the Metrolinx stage gate design process; and
- c. receive the letter attached to this Motion from community organizations and council representatives advocating for the fully funded construction of Cummer Station.

I am encouraged by this tremendous support of the mayor and council to continue advocating to the province to fully fund Cummer Station as part of their Yonge North Subway Extension plan. We will keep you updated on the province's response to our business case.

Friday

City Council voted to [rename Centennial Stadium the Rob Ford Stadium](#). Many councillors shared stirring speeches of the positive contributions of our former Mayor. Certainly he had a great reputation for showing up for his people. Due to the complexity of his legacy, I was unable to support this decision. However, moving forward, I will choose to remember the positive aspects of his leadership.

Motion Win for Action on IPV!

I also moved a [motion](#) for the city to establish a working group with me to ensure greater alignment and collaboration between front line serving organizations and our internal departments that have purview on intimate partner violence. Due to the complexity of the issue and the breadth of

departments that play a role, this is the first step we can take towards providing better support to victims and survivors of IPV.

FLIP Kitchen Update

Many community members have written to my office in support of the amazing food entrepreneurs that served delicious cuisine at the food incubator launched in 2022 at 5220 Yonge St. All of us were shocked to hear of their sudden eviction. I have been working with the Mayor's office and the Economic Development and Cultural Office to advocate for some financial support for these women who lost their source of income very suddenly. I'm happy to share that a motion was passed at council this week to reimburse these vendors from equity seeking groups, the rent they have paid during their tenancy. This will be a great support as they suddenly found themselves in a difficult transition.

FLIP Kitchen was launched in 2022 with an ambitious goal of supporting members of equity-seeking groups to launch food businesses. As we all know, the restaurant industry can be brutal, and unfortunately, this was experienced by our participants because they did not receive the support they hoped for when they applied for the program. This happened because the not-for-profit that was supposed to run the program was terminated early on, and the entrepreneurs were left to find their own way to survive. They were offered some outside mentoring and services from the Toronto Small Business Enterprise Centre which was not the support that they hoped to receive. There was no rent paid for 2022 and I passed a motion for abated rent in 2023. Unfortunately, a not-for-profit to run the program was not brought online during that time and the courageous entrepreneurs continued to fight to establish themselves without direct support.

As the contract and lease for a new operator selected through an RFP process, Feed Scarborough, was solidified, all leases had to be transferred to the lead operator. This meant new leases had to be signed. Our group of entrepreneurs declined. I do not agree with how this unfolded and feel badly that this is the result. I am working with city staff to prevent this from happening in the second iteration of this space.

Please do continue to follow our courageous and exhausted entrepreneurs as some will be continuing to provide food through catering.

[Da Endz](#)
[Teta's Kitchen](#)
[Chic Peas](#)

Thanks again for reading my email update! I hope it gives you a glimpse at the breadth that is covered in the role of City Councillor! I am deeply grateful for the opportunity to serve our community. I hope you have a wonderful weekend!

Warmest Regards,

 陳伶俐
Lily Cheng

Councillor Lily Cheng

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Congratulations to **Yonge North York BIA** on winning the **Innovation Award 2023!** Your "Attractions and Pathways Map" project is a fantastic initiative, and it's wonderful to see your commitment to enhancing the experience for residents, visitors, and workers in your vibrant neighborhood. The interactive map is a valuable tool for navigating the area, connecting underground pathways, and exploring local attractions. Exciting to see innovation recognized!

Click On The Links Below or Scroll Down To Learn More About:

~ COUNCILLOR UPDATES

- [Fight For Cummer Station](#)
- [Skate Party 2024](#)

~ CITY OF TORONTO UPDATES

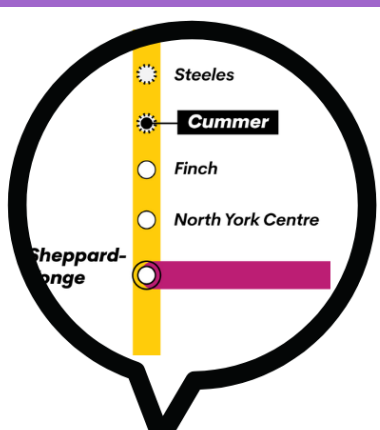
- [Yonge North Subway Extension Announcement](#)
- [Vacant Home Tax](#)
- [North York at the Centre](#)
- [Toronto Hydro Construction Notice](#)

~ COMMUNITY EVENTS ACROSS WILLOWDALE

- [Holiday Fair Supporting Epilepsy Toronto](#)
- [Legend of Huli](#)

COUNCILLOR UPDATES

FIGHT FOR CUMMER STATION



Build Cummer Station for 13,800 people & 5,700 jobs by 2051!



23,000 BOARDINGS AND ALIGHTINGS DURING TYPICAL WEEKDAY IN 2051

Help us fight for the future! Mayor Chow, councillors and community organizations are sending a joint letter to Premier Ford to fully fund Cummer Station. **WE NEED YOUR HELP** to sign our petition before the Dec 1st RFP closes leaving Cummer Station on the **Yonge North Subway Extension** chopping block. [CLICK HERE](#) to add your name and ask the Province of Ontario to BUILD CUMMER STATION!

[Sign The Petition](#)



The time has come for our **2nd Annual Willowdale Skate Party** at **Mel Lastman Square!** Join us for a wonderful time of experiencing community on and off the rink on **Sunday January 14, 2024 from 1PM - 4PM.**

Kick off 2024 with us as we skate with family, friends, and neighbours, enjoy jaw-opening ice skating performances and a fun interactive DJ, and warm up with hot chocolate and cup noodles in support of NeighbourLink North York.

This is a **free event** sponsored by **Tim Hortons** and **Yonge North York BIA**, and brought to you by **Councillor Lily Cheng, MP Ali Ehsassi** and **MPP Stan Cho**. Free rentals made available by the Skate Lending Library.

See you at the rink!

[RSVP](#)

YONGE NORTH SUBWAY EXTENSION ANNOUNCEMENT

The extension is moving forward with 5 new stations (Steeles Station, Clark Station, Royal Orchard Station, Bridge Station and High Tech Station) along an approximately 8 km route. The YNSE is one of the largest and most ambitious infrastructure projects in Canada and will put thousands of people and jobs in Vaughan, Markham, Richmond Hill and Toronto closer to rapid transit.

Metrolinx and Infrastructure Ontario evaluated submissions received through last spring’s request for qualifications and shortlisted 3 teams to submit proposals for delivering the advance tunnel contract. CrossTransit Group, North End Connectors, and Toronto-York Tunnel Connectors have been selected. Within their proposals, teams will submit their plans for tunnel design and construction, financing, as well as tunnel boring machine delivery and underground station support works.


We are targeting to award the contract to the successful team in late 2024. Tunnelling work will begin after a detailed schedule is finalized, however construction of this project is already underway at Finch Station, where early upgrades to accommodate future subway service are nearing completion.

[Learn More](#)

VACANT HOME TAX

In Toronto, owners of residential properties must declare their occupancy status annually, even if they live there. The Vacant Home Tax (VHT) applies to properties not serving as the principal residence, occupied by tenants, or eligible for exemptions for six months or more in a calendar year. Access the online portal for declarations now; the deadline is **February 29, 2024**.

[Learn More](#)



“ NORTH YORK AT THE CENTRE SECONDARY PLAN REVIEW

Share your thoughts on:

- Parks
- Community Centres
- Density
- Amenities
- ...and more!

★★★★★ IMPORTANT SURVEY!

COUNCILLOR CHENG

Your voice matters in shaping the future of North York Centre(Yonge Street from 401 to Cummer)! Join the community in imagining the future of our vibrant neighborhood by completing the [online Visioning Survey and Community Mapping Exercise](#). Share your thoughts on what makes North York Centre special and what you’d like to see in the future! The survey is open until **December 31st, 2023** – your input makes a difference!

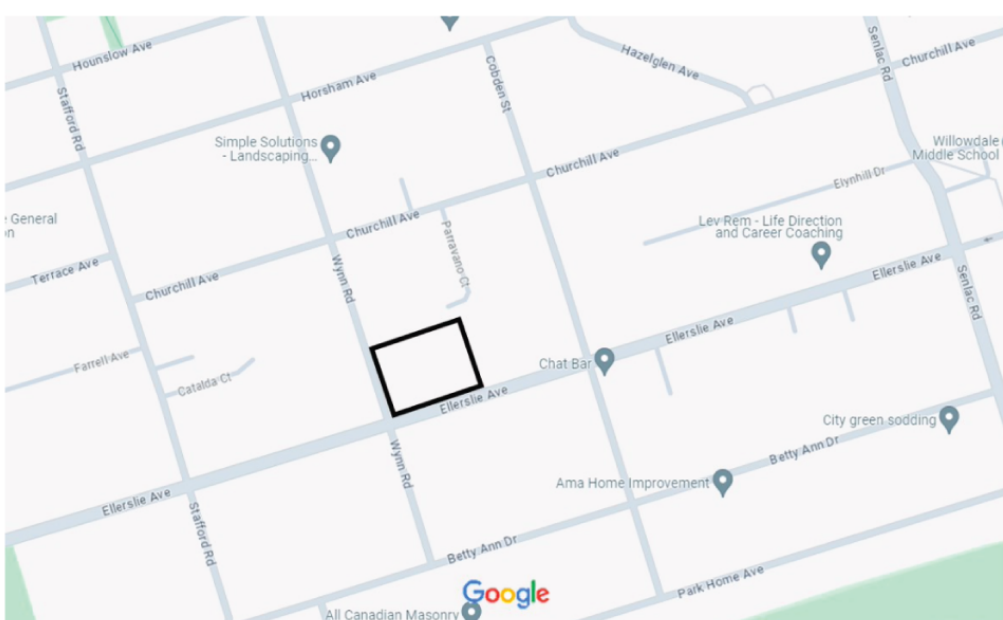
[CLICK HERE](#) to take the survey.

[Learn More](#)

Construction Notice 

PROJECT DETAILS

PROJECT NAME	PROJECT NUMBER	PROJECT AREA
388 Eglerslie Avenue	C-230033-W10101-LN050	A section of Eglerslie Avenue
WARD	EXPECTED TIMELINE	
18	January 2024 – May 2024	



Please be advised that Toronto Hydro will be conducting construction near your property at **388 Eglerslie Avenue**. This project involves the replacement of existing electrical cables within the city-owned property and is scheduled to take place from January to May 2024.

Project Area: A section of Eglerslie Avenue

Project Duration: January 2024 – May 2024

[Learn More](#)

COMMUNITY UPDATES

YONGE / FINCH STATION TASKFORCE



WASHROOM ACCOMMODATIONS FOR MLS RINK

Skating Season is **OPEN** at Mel Lastman Square! The outdoor skating rink at Mel Lastman Square is now open for leisure skating from **09:00 to 22:00** daily. All ages are welcome. In regards to washroom access, a recent flood at the Civic Centre caused damage to the east entrance bathroom that was set to reopen this season that was closed last year for accessibility upgrades. Due to the repairs the bathroom will remain closed for public safety until the restoration work is complete.

In late December, the indoor washroom facilities adjacent to the stage will be available to the public. Until that time, temporary portable washrooms are available, outside, within the Square in the upper area near the garden.

SURVEY OF ARTS AND CULTURE IN THE COMMUNITY

On behalf of our friends at **North York Arts** who are eager to hear what you have to say on Arts and Culture in the community, we invite you to share your thoughts in a brief survey! Help North York Arts create a more vibrant arts & culture experience in North York by sharing your feedback on the **types of events you'd like to see** and attend in your neighbourhood, **how you attend**

arts and culture events, and **a little bit about you!** Upon participating, you qualify for a chance to win a \$100 gift card (contest closes midnight on December 21st, winners announced via email on December 22nd).

Click [HERE](#) for Survey.



The most wonderful time of the year is just around the corner, and Epilepsy Toronto is thrilled to invite you to the spectacular Holiday Fair in The Square, right here in our community! The event promises to be the most enchanting holiday event in North York.

What to Expect: Winter Wonderland, Santa's Village, 65+ Artisans, Polar Point Bar, Holiday Midway, Roaming Performers, Fireside Lounge.

[Learn More](#)



'The Legend of Huli' is coming to the Meridian Arts Centre on **January 20 and 21!** Willowdale and producer Nina Zaslavsky and Artistic Director Roman Smirnov presents a mythical story of the east-asian celestial fox portrayed by world class performers from China and Ukraine. Experience a fusion of contemporary dance, light show and music ranging from baroque to flamenco, jazz, world and modern classics.

Get your tickets now!

Promo code FOX24 gives 15% off till December 24, 2023!

[Get Tickets](#)



CALL OUT FOR COATS...AND HATS AND SWEATERS AND WARM BOOTS- ESPECIALLY LARGER SIZES FOR MEN

Every Wednesday, Cummer Avenue United Church Drop Inn offers a hot meal, a shower, and when possible, fresh clothing to a significant number of our un-housed neighbours, many of whom are from already under-served, marginalized, or vulnerable populations.

These friends need our help to stay warm this winter, so we're asking Willowdale to donate clean, warm clothing, blankets, and sleeping bags in good condition for distribution through the Drop Inn. Sweaters, hats, scarves, ski pants, and gloves/mitts are also welcome. **New unwrapped socks and underwear** are also in very high demand, as are hand-warmers.

Items can be dropped off at Cummer Avenue United Church (53 Cummer Avenue) any Wednesday between 9 a.m. and 2 p.m. Parking is available on the west side of the building and a sign will guide you to the Drop Inn. 😊



LET'S CONNECT ON SOCIAL



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