

December 13<sup>th</sup>, 2022

GSAI File: 1530-001

Planning and Building Services  
Town of Newmarket  
395 Mulock Drive  
Newmarket, ON  
L3Y4X7

Attention: Casey Blakely  
Senior Planner, Development

**Re: Planning Opinion Letter  
Minister's Zoning Order Request  
835 Gorham Street**

Dear Ms. Blakely,

On behalf of Blue Door Support Services (“Blue Door”), please accept this request for your support and assistance to facilitate a Minister’s Zoning Order (“MZO”) to permit a 14-unit supportive housing townhouse development on the property noted above and at the northeast corner of Gorham Street and Alexander Road. This Letter provides a description of the subject property, surrounding area context, policy framework, proposed development and a summary of the timing constraints and urgency associated with this request.

Blue Door is a temporary and emergency housing provider in York Region that delivers housing and support for those experiencing homelessness. The property is currently occupied by Kevin’s Place Youth Shelter, which provides accommodation for up-to twelve persons on an emergency and overnight basis. Blue Door is seeking this MZO to allow for the expedient redevelopment and construction of a much-needed affordable housing project and to meet deadlines related to CMHC’s Rapid Housing Initiative funding program. The proposed 14-unit townhouse development is intended to accommodate more tenable, medium to longer-term housing that will allow people to transition to permanent housing options.



## 1.1 Subject Property

The subject property is located on the northeast corner of the intersection of Alexander Road and Gorham Street. The subject property has a gross site area of 0.15 hectares (0.37 acres). Following the anticipated conveyance of a 5x5m daylight triangle, the subject property is anticipated to have a net site area of 0.148 hectares (0.367 acres). No road widenings are required.

Kevin's Place Youth Shelter currently occupies the existing over 100-year-old, three storey detached home. Kevin's Place accommodates up to twelve (12) persons for short to medium term accommodations, plus staff.



*Figure 1: Subject Property*

A small gazebo, storage shed, multi-use basketball court, and parking area occupy the subject property's undeveloped areas. The property line is framed with a wooden fence on all sides and an existing full moves driveway provides vehicular access from Gorham Street. Existing municipal sidewalks abut the west and south sides of the subject property. The subject property has a gentle southward slope with the highest points being nearest the home at 209 Alexander Street. There are two trees nearest Gorham Street and in the front yard and the subject property is sodded where no amenities, driveways or walkways exist.

## 1.2 Area Context

The neighbourhood consists mainly of single-detached residential dwellings, townhouses, commercial areas, public institutions, and greenspace.

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|--------|--|
| North: | Single-detached residential dwellings, Sacred Heart Catholic High School, Mazo de la Roche Public School, South Lake Regional Health Center, park and open spaces;   |
| East:  | Single-detached residential dwellings, townhouses, seniors and apartment residential dwellings, Charles E. Boyd Park, Cedarview Community Church, Newmarket & District Christian Academy, commercial area; |



- South: Single-detached residential dwellings, Church of Jesus Christ of Latter-Day Saints, park and open spaces;
- West: Single-detached residential dwellings, co-op townhouses, Fairgrounds Park, Prince Charles Public School

Immediately adjacent to the property, there is a two-storey residential home to the north, and a currently vacant lot with an approved townhouse development to the east. The surrounding area is well served by the existing community, employment and recreational services. The area has the ability to support residents of the proposed development and combined will contribute to the achievement of a complete community. These include the surrounding schools, parks, public spaces and services, and commercial and employment uses to the east. Further, the site is directly serviced by York Region Transit Gorham-Eagle Bus #56 which provides connections to local, Town and inter-regional transit.

## 2.0 Proposed Development

The proposed development consists of a three-storey stacked townhouse building with associated parking, service and walkway areas (herein referred to as the “proposed development”). The proposed development is intended to accommodate more tenable, longer-term housing that will allow people to transition to more permanent affordable housing.

The proposed townhouse building will be oriented to flank Alexander Road and will provide a maintenance enclosure and snow storage area at the rear. Landscaped setbacks will be provided on all lot lines with the adjacent properties and Gorham Street and Alexander Road.

A total of fourteen (14) units are proposed, five of which will be accessible and contained entirely on the first floor, while the remainder will be combined second/third storey units split vertically. The northern portion of the townhouse block, nearest the adjacent property, will consist of a single-storey support office attached to the main building. All units will be accessed from west-facing entrances fronting Alexander Road and all will have a private terrace or balcony.

The first floor will consist of one (1) one-bedroom and four (4) two-bedroom units, all of which will be accessible units, and the second/third storey units will all consist of three-bedroom family sized units. The units will comprise a mix of affordable and supportive units with staff on site to provide assistance for those occupying the supportive units. Combined, a total residential gross floor area of 1,502 m<sup>2</sup> (16,167 ft<sup>2</sup>) and office of 40m<sup>2</sup> (430 ft<sup>2</sup>) provide for a total gross floor area of 1,542 m<sup>2</sup> (16,597 ft<sup>2</sup>).



Figure 2: Landscape Plan



The existing curb cut and driveway entrance to Gorham Street will be generally maintained in its existing location and will facilitate vehicle access to the proposed development. There will not be any central waste area and all units will have their own garbage bins. Space has been accommodated for snow storage. Two walkways, one from Gorham Street and one from Alexander Road, provide pedestrian access through the subject property. Fourteen (14) parking spaces (including 2 accessible spaces) are provided at the rear of the townhouse block and nearest the property adjacent and to the west. The parking spaces will serve residents, visitors, and staff. Six (6) bicycle parking spaces are provided nearest Gorham Drive.

### **3.0 Planning Policy Context**

This section of the Brief summarizes the current policy framework that applies to the subject property and proposed development.

#### **3.1 Provincial Policy Statement, 2020**

The Provincial Policy Statement (the “PPS”) provides high-level direction on matters of provincial interest and those specifically relating to the land use planning process in Ontario. Development is required to be consistent with the PPS. The PPS has a strong focus on the provision of housing options including affordable housing. The proposed development is consistent with the policy directives of the PPS and is consistent with policies relating to the provision of housing.

#### **3.2 A Place to Grow: Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (Office Consolidation 2020)**

The Growth Plan for the Greater Golden Horseshoe (the “Growth Plan”) provides a policy framework for building strong and prosperous communities within the Greater Golden Horseshoe area. The Growth Plan’s housing directives support complete communities that provide a diverse range and mix of housing options, including additional residential units and affordable housing, to accommodate people at all stages of life, and to accommodate the needs of all household sizes, special requirements and incomes. The proposed development will implement the directives of the Growth Plan by increasing the affordable housing stock in the Built-Up Area of York Region and Newmarket and will contribute to the creation of complete communities.

#### **3.3 Region of York Official Plan (June 2022)**

The subject property is designated Urban Area and Community Area by the Region of York Official Plan (the “Regional Plan”). Townhouses are permitted by Regional Plan policies and the Regional Plan encourages the provision of affordable housing for all ages, household sizes, and abilities.

#### **3.4 Town of Newmarket Official Plan (August 2022)**

The subject property is designated Residential Area by the Town of Newmarket Official Plan (the “Official Plan”). Residential Areas permit a range of housing types, tenures and sizes to help satisfy the Town of Newmarket’s long-term housing needs. Uses permitted in the Residential Area



designation include townhouses of varying types. The Official Plan requires that new housing development should provide for some element of affordable to low- and moderate-income households. A portion of these units should be accessible to people with disabilities and include a range of types, unit size, and tenures to provide opportunities for all household types.

Development in Residential Areas is required to be compatible with the existing physical character of the surrounding neighbourhood. The proposed development provides for an articulated building design whereby the lowest 1-storey portion is nearest the existing home to the north and on Alexander Street. This allows for appropriate separation from the taller two-and-three storey building elements while providing a scalable built form for the portion of the townhouse block nearest the existing home. Entrances are ground related and oriented to face Alexander Road. Landscape setbacks are provided around all property lines and the parking and walkways areas are oriented to provide a further buffer to existing adjacent residential uses.



*Figure 3: Elevation looking east*

Through the provision of an affordable housing project and by considering matters of compatibility with adjacent properties and the area, the proposed development will conform to the Official Plan and an amendment to the Official Plan is not required.

### **3.5 Town of Newmarket Zoning By-law (2010-40)**

The subject property is currently zoned Residential Detached Dwelling 30M Zone - R1-B. This zone only permits detached dwelling units and stacked townhouse development is not permitted under this zoning. As a result, and through this MZO request, we're seeking Council's authorization to request that the Minister rezone the subject property to R4-S to permit the proposed stacked townhouses.

## **4.0 Community Consultation**

While the Planning Act does not require notice and/or public consultation for a MZO, Blue Door has committed to holding future meetings in a Town Hall format and will be establishing a



community liaison committee. Blue Door has and will continue to be a good neighbour and understands the importance of community outreach and consultation.

## **5.0 Requested MZO and Urgency**

Blue Door is requesting the Town and Council’s assistance to request a Minister’s Zoning Order (MZO) to the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing to expedite the provision of affordable housing and to establish the Zoning required to permit the proposed stacked townhouses. The MZO would have the effect of amending the current R1-B zone to permit the proposed development. Section 47 of the Planning Act grants the Minister of Municipal Affairs and Housing the ability to authorize a MZO whereby expedited development approvals are in the public interest and where a critical project has been identified.

The proposed development supports York Region’s 10-year housing and homelessness strategy and the goals identified in the Region’s “Housing Solutions: A Place for Everyone” document (Phase 2 Plan 2019-2023). York Region’s 2021 Point-in-Time count identified 20% of individuals experiencing homelessness had family members with them. The proposed development is designed to meet the immediate housing needs of families by providing family sized units in addition to the one-bedroom accessible units.

Blue Door will be applying for funding under the CMHC’s project stream of the Rapid Housing Initiative (“RHI”) program with an upcoming deadline of March 15<sup>th</sup>, 2023. The proposed development will not be possible without funding from CMHC. RHI applications require that the appropriate zoning be in place or that a timeline be provided indicating when the zoning will be in place.

Due to the length of time required to process a Zoning By-law Amendment application, a MZO is required to facilitate the necessary Zoning By-law amendments to permit the land use and stacked townhouses proposed and thus facilitate the RHI application. With Town Council’s timely support for the request to the MMAH, Blue Door would have the reassurance that the proposed development will move forward promptly and with the appropriate funding in place. This will ultimately result in the construction and completion of these affordable and supportive homes in a timely manner.

## **6.0 Conclusion**

The proposed development provides for affordable and supportive housing in the form of fourteen (14) stacked townhouse units. The proposed development will ultimately contribute to the affordable housing objectives and policies of the PPS, Growth Plan, Region of York Official Plan and Town of Newmarket Official Plan. As described above, Council’s direction to proceed with the MZO would guarantee the provision of affordable housing in the Town and contribute to goals and objectives that are in the public interest. As such, Blue Door is requesting the following of Council:



- That Council provide support and a vote in the affirmative in support of the MZO at the Council meeting scheduled on January 23<sup>rd</sup>, 2023;
- That Council direct staff to expedite and submit the necessary MZO documentation to the MMAH;
- That Council advise staff, in conjunction with ourselves, to begin drafting the site-specific Zoning By-law; and
- That Council direct staff to assist and expedite with the review and approvals for all associated planning and building permit applications to facilitate construction of the proposed affordable townhouse project.

We thank you for your consideration and assistance with this matter. Please do not hesitate to reach out to us or any Blue Door representative should you have any questions.

With Regards,

**GLEN SCHNARR & ASSOCIATES INC.**

Bruce McCall-Richmond MCIP, RPP  
Associate

cc. Michael Braithwaite, Blue Door Support Services