

Housing project could be next victim

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Construction on an \$80 million non-profit housing complex for 300 vulnerable women and children will likely grind to a halt in two weeks because striking Toronto planning staff haven't issued the necessary permits, says the YWCA Toronto, which broke ground on the project in January.

The delay will cost the social service agency more than \$1 million in extra construction fees and penalties — money the agency doesn't have, said Joan White, director of housing, support and development for the Y.

The agency, which is raising an ambitious \$15 million towards the project during tough economic times, is still scrambling to find donors for the final \$5 million she said.

One option the agency's lawyers are considering is to proceed without the building permits and hire private engineers to certify the work, White said.

The city's website notes any construction during the strike without proper permits is subject to penalties or a removal order. But city spokesperson Rob Andrusevich said the city is working with the Y to ensure the project continues safely.

The project on Elm Street — the largest private non-profit housing project in the city in a decade — has been in the planning stages for two years and is currently under excavation. It was on the verge of receiving full site plan approval from the city — including foundation and structural building permits — just as city workers walked off the job June 22.

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The construction site at 87 Elm Street, the YWCA, a non-profit housing project for more than 300 vulnerable women and children will likely grind to a halt in two weeks because striking city buildings and inspection staff haven't issued the necessary permits.