



方卓怡 市議員 **Paula FLETCHER**

Councillor Toronto-Danforth Ward 30

Thursday, January 14, 2009

Councillor Giorgio Mammoliti, Chair
Affordable Housing Committee

Dear Mr. Chair and Members of the Affordable Housing Committee

I am writing the committee to request the support of the Affordable housing Committee for an arts focused affordable housing at 1135 Dundas St. E. This property is a vacant Toronto District School Board (TDSB) industrial site on the TDSB surplus list.

The City of Toronto's Agenda for Prosperity highlights the important role of the arts in Toronto's economy. Toronto is North America's 3rd largest screen-based arts centre with a creative and knowledge based sector that generates an annual GDP of \$9 billion. While a lucrative industry, it is also recognized that income levels of the majority of working artists remains low. Affordable housing which supports those who work in key economic sectors is one of the ways that the City can support key industries.

The site is close to the Studio District and within the Dundas-Carlaw corridor which remains an important hub for creative industry jobs while under increasing pressure from development interests. A recent area study by the School of Urban and Regional Planning indicates that close to 50% of businesses operating within the corridor are from creative based industries. There is a strong artist's base in the area, and such would benefit greatly from a project which keeps housing affordable in an area undergoing gentrification.

In 2004, the city signalled to the TDSB that it was interested in this site for affordable housing which includes an economic and cultural hub. Through TEDCO a feasibility study was completed by local architect Joe Lobko. At the time, a number of arts and community groups were very interested but there was no agreement from TDSB.

Now the new Toronto lands Corporation has recently listed this site for disposition. Through the AFC, I would request a report back in three months on opportunities that still exist to realize an affordable live-work project for artists at this location.

Sincerely,

Paula Fletcher
City Councillor, Ward 30