March 27, 2014

Dear Chair and Planning and Growth Management Committee Members,

Re: Optimizing Opportunity in the West Toronto / Georgetown Rail Corridor – Coordination of Planning Initiatives

Traffic congestion, overcrowding on our public transit, and the need for expanded transportation infrastructure are major concerns for Torontonians. Together we need to explore ways to address these concerns as efficiently and effectively as we can to keep our City moving forward. Several planning initiatives are currently underway in proximity to the West Toronto / Georgetown Rail Corridor. These initiatives include the following:

a. Official Plan Review of Employment and Transportation policies (underway)
b. Beside the Tracks: Knitting the Rail Corridor Back to the Community (completed)
c. West Toronto Rail Path Environmental Assessment (in progress)
d. Liberty Village East / West Street Environmental Assessment; (in progress);
e. South Niagara Planning Study (in progress);
f. Dupont Street Regeneration Area Study (in progress)
g. St. Clair Avenue Underpass (in progress)
h. Mount Dennis Mobility Hub (in progress)
i. Potential John Street Cultural Centre (Weston) (under discussion)
j. West of Downtown Growth Study (planned, not yet initiated)

I believe there is an opportunity to alleviate some of our City’s transportation woes if we optimize our existing rail infrastructure and surrounding public spaces in west Toronto. I respectfully suggest the following recommendations in an effort to enhance and improve these planning initiatives.

Recommendations:

That Planning and Growth Management Committee request:

1. That the Chief Planner and Executive Director, City Planning Division, in consultation with staff from Transportation Services, Parks, Forestry and Recreation, Economic Development and Culture, the Toronto Transit Commission, and Metrolinx / GO Transit, coordinate planning initiatives currently underway and future initiatives to optimize the potential along the West Toronto / Georgetown Rail corridor (Bathurst to Weston) to:
a. Improve public transit; relieve traffic congestion; increase active transportation including walking and cycling; and explore the possibility of a dedicated transit line within the existing rail corridor;
b. Expand and enhance green space and explore other public realm improvements;
c. Continue exploring opportunities for protecting and growing employment uses and/or lands; and

d. Achieve a cohesive vision to guide development and enhance the amenity and livability of adjacent neighbourhoods.

Thank you for your time and consideration of this matter.

Sustainably yours,

Mike Layton
City Councillor
Ward 19, Trinity-Spadina