

HARBORD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

Box 68522, 360A Bloor St. W.
Toronto, ON M5S 1X1



To Members of the Planning and Growth Management Committee
Re: PG 28.1 Second Units OPA

Dear Councillors:

April 4, 2018.

Harbord Village Residents' Association is concerned that a matter that envisions major change to the Official Plan has come to your Committee with no notice to our Downtown community. We were not aware of this initiative until the committee agenda was circulated.

HVRA represents the area bounded by College, Bloor, Spadina and Bathurst. We are active on planning files and are engaged with City issues on a daily basis.

We understand the Province is seeking to broaden housing options. We support the general need for rental and affordable housing. But with only four council meetings before the election, we are concerned that rush into large-scale policy change will create instability in existing highly functioning neighbourhoods.

We are puzzled by this process. On one hand, a general OPA amendment is introduced late in the term that is intended to extend the reach of all types of subsidiary housing throughout the City. What kind of public engagement is actually thought to be adequate on such a major change? The time available is uncomfortably short.

At the same time, a sister or subsidiary initiative to expand approvals for laneway housing in Toronto and East York-only is being prepared for a quick approval before council rises in July. The relationship between these two is unclear. Does the OPA today set the table to permit laneway housing in future to be expanded City wide? If that is the case, why not twin the initiatives and work them both through a measured public process?

The Laneway housing study has been in the public arena for several months. There remains an uncomfortable lack of clarity on expected uptake, projected impacts on rents, taxes and housing values, lack of affordability, challenges to zoning that would be heard at community of adjustment—a host of untested assumptions that are basically a recipe for trying something out and fixing it later. We should not do that to the City.

We urge the Committee to defer this matter and to seek opportunities to integrate it with existing policy reviews.

Respectfully,

Sue Dexter

HVRA Planning and Development Committee

c.c. Councillor Cressy

Lynda Macdonald

Gregg Lintern