



West Don Lands Committee

Citizens for the Old Town /
Architectural Conservancy of Ontario

Corktown Residents & Business
Association

Distillery Historic District

Dixon Hall

Enoch Turner Schoolhouse Foundation

Friends of Corktown Common

Goederham & Worts Neighbourhood
Association

Little Trinity Anglican Church

St. Lawrence Market Neighbourhood BIA

St. Lawrence Neighbourhood
Association

Task Force to Bring Back the Don

Chair David Shiner and members of
Planning & Growth Management Committee

RE: PG30.5 – Unilever Precinct Planning Study Secondary Plan and Planning Framework, and East Harbour Official Plan and Zoning By-Law Amendment Applications – Final Report

June 6, 2018

By email: pgmc@toronto.ca

Dear Councillors,

The West Don Lands Committee has been pleased to contribute to the Stakeholder Advisory Committee for this project, first initiated by First Gulf in 2015 and then transitioning to this City-led SAC for Secondary Plan and Planning Framework. We have also participated in the public meetings on the project and have been favourably impressed by the responsiveness and engagement of City Planners, Councillor Fletcher and her staff, and First Gulf staff and consultants. The final reports reflect the outcomes of these consultations with no surprises and provide positive direction for creating a vibrant urban neighbourhood within provincial and city policy directions and the provisions of the Official Plan land use designation.

We urge this committee and Council to adopt these study documents – Secondary Plan, Precinct Plan Framework and Zoning By-laws – as presented. This is a major step forward. There is still much to do before beginning the build-out of East Harbour/Unilever Precinct by way of aligning the contributions of First Gulf, Metrolinx, the TTC, TRCA, Waterfront Toronto and the City. The West Don Lands Committee wishes to continue our engagement with the parties in maximizing the potential of this precinct that is expressed through these documents.

Stages still-to-come include the completion by WT, TRCA and City of flood protection, the final design of Metrolinx and TTC public transit infrastructure, delivery of public realm and open space commitments under section 37 agreements, and the co-ordination and delivery of green infrastructure for managing energy, water, active transportation and biodiversity. These initiatives all require co-ordination of agencies and ongoing attention to public input to achieve the best outcomes.

Particular concerns that we would like to point out as requiring our ongoing input include:

Physical mobility connection across the Don River to West Don Lands and Distillery District;

Plans by Metrolinx, the City and First Gulf to connect East Harbour and the transit hub to the west side of the Don River are welcome. Furthermore, it is important that these connections be robust enough to address a variety of mobility issues. It is our view that a simple ramp to the Lower Don Trail near the Bala Underpass is inadequate. This will serve well cycling and other active uses, but a protected and secure passageway that reaches to the street at Mill Street and Lower Bayview is a necessity for travelers to and from school, work, and cultural activities at all times of day on both the west and east sides of the river. An equitable agreement of funding, maintenance and design of this link is required.

Biodiversity co-planning for natural environment considerations in East Harbour, Lower Don River, West Don Lands, and Port Lands;

The studies before you recognize the critical importance of biodiversity planning in this precinct, but the ability of the City to require, rather than simply to “encourage” biodiversity considerations is limited. It is important that both local and expert knowledge, as well as private and public good will, be applied to the highest standards for bird-friendliness, pollinator protection, management of the migration of rare and endangered species, and protection and enhancement of riparian ecology. East Harbour will become a new downtown core built at the nexus between a newly naturalized eastern waterfront and the upstream Don watershed. Such a development that protects the natural environment linkages is unprecedented, but necessary if we are to protect nature for “seven generations” in the 21st century urban setting.

Programming complementarity between East Harbour, Distillery District and eastern waterfront;

The conversation has begun to determine how to align East Harbour retail and cultural offerings with the business districts east of the Don River along Queen Street. Fulsome discussions and plans need to take place between East Harbor and Canary, Corktown and Distillery Districts, as well as emerging destinations along the eastern waterfront and Port Lands.

Green infrastructure expansion opportunities need exploration at a wider scale:

The Secondary Plan and Planning Framework encourage and require (insofar as possible) initiatives for green energy efficiency, stormwater management, active mobility, and life-long inclusiveness. Ongoing effort to leverage scalable opportunities and collaborate within the surrounding neighbourhoods and evolving precincts will help to realize the Eco-District Sustainability, Equity and Urban Design goals that First Gulf has committed to.

We look forward to continuing the involvement of the West Don Lands Committee and our member organizations with the exciting emerging district in East Harbour. We welcome and endorse the work of City Planning in developing the Planning Framework, Official Plan and Zoning amendments to move this district forward.

Yours truly,



John Wilson
Co-Chair
416-432-2544
johnwilson338@gmail.com



Cindy Wilkey
Co-Chair
416-892-8941
wilkeycj@gmail.com

cc. Councillor Paula Fletcher
Councillor Lucy Troisi
Gregg Lintern
Lynda Macdonald
David Gerofsky, First Gulf
Derek Goring, First Gulf