



December 16, 2019

**Re: EX11.6 Parkdale Hub Project - Feasibility Study**

Dear Members of Toronto City Council,

On behalf of the Toronto Environmental Alliance (TEA), we encourage you to support Phase 2 of the proposed Parkdale Community Hub project. We encourage City Council to approve the recommendations of the staff and Executive Committee.

We would like to take this opportunity to highlight a number of key aspects of this project:

- 1. Creation of a purpose-built community hub:** As sites of resident engagement and service-delivery, community hubs are well-placed to incubate and showcase innovative climate action. Many existing hubs are already implementing a range of pro-climate initiatives and delivering programs in climate co-benefits areas. Hubs provide key social and physical infrastructure that can advance low-carbon initiatives and build community resilience to climate shocks.
- 2. Building new affordable housing units:** Affordable rental housing types that are designed for permanency, deep affordability, intergenerationality, wrap-around supports and live-work spaces is critically needed in Parkdale to meet the needs of existing residents. These priorities were made very clear by community members during the consultation sessions TEA attended and many of these design considerations also support the creation (or preservation) of low-carbon, complete communities. We look forward to seeing sustainable housing designs emerge for Parkdale that meet an upper tier Toronto Green Standard (Tier 4) and showcase the range of climate co-benefits that can be realized from green buildings including lower operating costs, healthier homes and more resilient 'climate proof' infrastructure.
- 3. Adaptive re-use of historic buildings:** In addition to their cultural value, historic buildings have embodied carbon value, which means there are greater climate and ecological benefits to reusing and retrofitting existing buildings - where possible - than there is in demolishing and rebuilding.
- 4. Activating Queen Street West with pedestrian-oriented streetscapes:** Many local residents and visitors to Parkdale rely on public transit and walking to get around the neighbourhood. Designing streetscapes to be safer and more welcoming for pedestrians is an important element of low-carbon transportation planning. Prioritizing pedestrians and re-designing street infrastructure will help Toronto meet TransformTO's goal of 75% of trips under 5 km being walked or cycled.
- 5. Developing the Community Engagement Strategy and the Operations and Collaboration Framework:** we encourage you to draw upon the expertise, knowledge and skills of local community groups and organizations including Parkdale People's Economy, Parkdale Neighbourhood Land Trust, Parkdale Activity-Recreation Centre, West Neighbourhood House and the Parkdale Residents' Association.
- 6. Environmental Studies:** We encourage Council and City staff to go beyond the mandatory environmental surveys and assessments by undertaking a comprehensive sustainability and climate assessment of the redevelopment site. In the Parkdale Community Benefits Framework,



residents prioritized sustainable infrastructure including clean and renewable energy, climate retrofits of existing buildings, passive housing design for new units, extreme weather resilience, as well as investing in community assets like natural infrastructure (e.g. green spaces, food gardens). With funding from The Atmospheric Fund and the Ontario Trillium Foundation, Toronto Environmental Alliance has been supporting Parkdale residents and staff to visit other community hubs in North York and Scarborough to explore potential sustainable design elements for the Parkdale Community Hub.

In closing, we would like to reaffirm our support for Phase 2 of the proposed Parkdale Community Hub project. In order to respond to the growing urgency of affordable housing and climate change, we need to turn our attention to neighbourhood redevelopment projects that truly serve to benefit existing residents, increase the number of affordable housing units and create more sustainable, equitable and complete communities. This won't happen unless it is intentionally designed, and that design must deeply engage the people who live and work in Parkdale.

We are encouraged by this City-led redevelopment project and hope to support it in any way we can as it enters Phase 2.