

July 11, 2021

Dear Councillors,

As chair of EPRA I have already written a letter to the Planning and Housing Committee on the subject of the motion brought forward there by Councillor Wong-Tam, upon an initiative by the three councillors at Yonge and Eglinton asking for a careful study of the potential future of the city-owned lands at the southeast corner, currently occupied by the old bus barns, and by two office buildings.

I do not want to run through all the same arguments: that Yonge and Eglinton is very full of people, and that it looks to see its population double, that it lacks badly the social and cultural infrastructure its inhabitants require, that it is a strategic spot where two transit lines will cross, that this is the only chance to repair what's missing. You know all that already.

Rather, i want to stress to you the remarkable unity of us citizens at Yonge and Eglinton - - how strongly we want you to heed the advice of our local councillors. That working group we joined was remarkable for its harmony and energy. We had some eleven citizens' groups, between the seven Residents' Associations, the condo boards, the BIAs, a tenants' association, the school trustees, and the three councillors. The dialogue was harmonious, inventive, and positive in its vision and its spirit.

One sign of how strong is our local backing is that cascade of almost 400 letters, all stirred up with only two days' notice, and all produced between a Wednesday and a Friday. There are a lot more potential letters up here; everybody pretty well agrees that Yonge and Eglinton needs careful thinking and inspired vision.

We worry that some will argue for the inertial solution: look, we have the contract, we know the benefits, we fear legal entanglements. We say, in reply, do not walk away from the contract; it may turn out, with adjustments, to offer a solution. But perhaps not; our job at the moment is to step back and study our needs, our goals, and our legal obligations, with an open mind. That means passing the motion brought before you.

Tom Cohen
Chair, EPRA
cc the EPRA board and the members of the Midtown coalition