



# GOODERHAM & WORTS

## NEIGHBOURHOOD ASSOCIATION

OCTOBER 26, 2021

To: Members of the Executive Committee  
City of Toronto

**RE: 1. [Ex27.8 The First Parliament Site and Expropriation of City Owned Lands by Metrolinx for Transit Purposes](#)  
2. [Ex27.9 First Parliament Master Plan](#)**

The GWNA represents over 2,000 residents in and around the Distillery District National Historic Site. We have a well-established commitment to the preservation and celebration of the heritage landscape of the Distillery but also to wise development permitting the growth of a vital neighbourhood.

The GWNA has participated in the working groups which developed the First Parliament Master Plan, in the First Parliament Working Group assembled by Councillor Wong-Tam and on the Local Advisory Committee to Infrastructure Ontario.

**On behalf of the Gooderham & Worts Neighbourhood Association, I urge the Executive Committee of the City of Toronto to ensure that the motion to approve the finalized First Parliament Master Plan as proposed by staff is endorsed by Executive Committee and forwarded to City Council for final approval.**

The First Parliament Master Plan is the result of almost twenty years of community and City collaboration in building a vision that ensures the preservation and commemoration of our civic heritage. The First Parliament Site, as it is commonly known, encapsulates the long history of our City from pre-contact through to the present day. It is one of the few sites remaining in the City to allow us to acknowledge the foundational presence of the Indigenous treaty-holders of the land, the development of our democratic systems of government and the on-going social and industrial development of the City. The importance of this site cannot be over-estimated.

We realize that the passage of the First Parliament Master Plan may seem to be unnecessary given the expropriation of the land by Metrolinx but it is, in fact, more important than ever. We have seen expropriations, MZOs and Land Tribunal decisions undermine the capacity of our community to develop a liveable neighbourhood, leading to an unchecked growth in density and the loss of both built heritage and green space. By approving the Master Plan, we will be able to point to a document carrying the full weight of Council approval as negotiations with the Province move forward.



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Our community has spent twenty years developing a vision for the First Parliament Site; we ask that City Council acknowledge the significance of this site by approving the First Parliament Master Plan.

**In conjunction with the approval of the Master Plan, we are urging Executive Committee to also approve the staff report on expropriation of the First Parliament Site - with some reservations.**

1. The Site itself is not surplus land; the parcel of land which constitutes the site was assembled carefully and slowly by the City IN ORDER to create a heritage and commemorative civic space. The Toronto Public Library surrendered land it owned outright IN ORDER to assist in the assembly of the site.
2. The purpose of land acquisition for this site over many years was very specific. It was never intended to be revenue-producing but rather to provide green space for a community lacking in such, to commemorate our collective history on a site that links to and reflects the existing heritage of this part of the City, and to provide community benefits such as a regional library, an interpretive centre, affordable housing and other cultural resources.
3. If revenues are generated by the sale of the land, whether through the expropriation process or otherwise, we urge City Council to ensure that the investment by our community in this property is not dissipated. Revenues must be returned to the civic developments expected by the community – parkland, the library, the interpretive centre. We expect that they will be earmarked for the civic development of this site and this site alone.

We write in the expectation that the expropriation of some part of the First Parliament Site by the Province may be an inevitability. **However, we also ask City Council on our behalf to express as strongly as possible to the Provincial government that the citizens of our City are opposed to the loss of the site; and to empower City staff to negotiate on our behalf the return of as much of the land as possible for civic use.**

Thank you for your time and attention.

Diana Belshaw

Vice-President and Chair Development Committee  
Gooderham & Worts Neighbourhood Association

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