



5050 Yonge Street, 5th Floor, Toronto, Ontario, M2N 5N8 • Tel: (416) 397-2572 • Fax: (416) 397-3114

OFFICE OF THE CHAIR

March 24, 2014

STATEMENT BY CHAIR CHRIS BOLTON TO EXECUTIVE COMMITTEE ON MARCH 25, 2014

Mr. Mayor, Deputy Mayor and Members of Council

Thank you for this opportunity to speak to this Committee.

As Chairman of the Toronto District School Board and School Trustee for this Ward I am very familiar with issues affecting the Waterfront School site, in particular the dramatic decline in pedestrian safety for school children and their parents obtaining access to and from the school. This decline coincides directly with the increased passenger levels of the airport. In particular these relate to the intersection of Queens Quay and Eireann Quay and the use of Eireann Quay as the sole access for the airport.

Background

The Waterfront School was built in 1997 in conjunction with the City Community Centre as part of a joint project between TDSB and the City. This co-venture was pursued in the spirit of creating a complete neighbourhood consistent with the vision for this area. In terms of children in our care, there are 220 elementary students and 150 secondary school students in the school facility (total 370) and increased pressure for additional students resulting from additional residential development in the area and planned for the future. The facility also accommodates a pre-school age daycare centre and of course the City Community Centre. The majority of the elementary school children live in housing west of Eireann Quay and south of the Lakeshore and therefore must cross Eireann Quay and Queens Quay to access the school. Traffic conditions in and around that area are not conducive to a neighbourhood that has been designed around the amenities that exist.

Eireann Quay is essentially operating today as a private driveway for the exclusive use of the airport and it is wedged between a number of vital community amenities. It separates the park from the school, the school from the residents west of Bathurst, and it marginalizes children in their options in securing safe access in and around the area unless they are in cars.

In April 2012, in advance of Site Plan approval of the pedestrian tunnel, TDSB retained legal counsel as well as traffic and air quality experts to help us clarify and deal with the proposal. In response to TDSB's concerns the City and the Toronto Port Authority agreed to undertake a transportation study to address this issue and other community transportation concerns. The ensuing public process involved community stakeholders, including TPA and a representative of

the police services from Division 14 who have first-hand knowledge of the traffic safety and parking issues in this area and other agencies.

The City's final report was to be released in March 2013. However, as a result of the initiative by Porter Airlines to seek permission for Jet planes, the report was shelved as it was determined by City Staff that further studies would have to be undertaken. Accordingly, the expected substantial transportation improvements anticipated by TDSB were further delayed.

In the following months, the formal taxi queuing area on Queen's Quay was moved to the Malting lands where limited teacher parking was also provided. The area also serves as a construction staging area immediately behind the school and provides for other traffic movements by busses, construction vehicles and service trucks serving the airport. The relocation of the taxi staging area on Eireann Quay had some short term success but such was short lived. Time does not permit me to identify all the problems that continue to persist. Suffice to say this is not the long term solution. Similarly, the changes to right and left turning controls provides some modest relief, but again is not the solution.

Airport Expansion/Tripartite Agreement Amendment

In response to the Porter initiative a new public process was commenced by the City in 2013 to address many concerns, including the same traffic safety concerns relating to airport bound traffic using Eireann Quay and the safety issues relating to the Waterfront School children and their parents. TDSB has been fully engaged in this process and have proposed numerous suggestions for consideration to resolve the issue. In meetings with City Staff and the City's Transportation consultants, we were advised that there was no solution to resolve the existing safety issues for the school children. We do not accept that conclusion and believe much more creative work needs to be done to resolve this issue. We have waited almost three years for such to occur and believe it is unreasonable that further delays be permitted. The interests of the children's safety and the importance of the school to the social fabric of the community must come first before the commercial business interests of the airport or any of its users.

The simple statement I wish to make is that the status quo is unsafe, is not acceptable and cannot continue. Solutions, as well as commitments for the funding for such, must be in place before any approvals for expansion to the airport are granted, including any amendments to the Tripartite Agreement. We therefore ask this issue be addressed by adding the following Recommendations to the Staff Report:

For Phase One:

"commencement of additional planning and transportation studies to resolve the existing and projected transportation and pedestrian safety issues affecting the students and their parents of the Waterfront School on Eireann Quay and at the intersection of Eireann Quay and Queens Quay."

For Phase Two:

"completion of the planning and transportation studies addressing the existing and projected transportation safety issues referenced in Recommendation One and securing commitments for funding for the immediate implementation of such findings prior to any amendments to the Tripartite Agreement."

Malting Lands Lease Extension

We also understand TPA is also seeking an extension to their lease with the City beyond 2014 for the use of the Malting Lands. It is TDSB's position that no extension should be granted until

TDSB is consulted and its concerns addressed. These concerns include the construction of a 30 ft Parent/Student drop off area, the provision for parent short term parking, relocating the teacher parking area closer to the school and the hiring, at TPA's sole expense, of off-duty police officers 5 days a week during school peak pedestrian and traffic hours for the entire school term until the safety issues are resolved. We would ask that the City ensure that such Officers be properly briefed so that they can do the most effective job in securing traffic safety for this immediate area. Previous Officers paid for by TPA have come from Divisions outside the area who were not familiar with the issues and were not effective.

We would seek a recommendation of the Executive Committee to Council to this effect.
I would be pleased to answer any questions.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Chris Bolton". The signature is fluid and cursive, with a long horizontal stroke at the end.

Chris Bolton
Chair, TDSB and Ward Trustee