

May 9, 2014

Yvonne Davies  
Administrator, Scarborough Community Council  
150 Borough Drive, Floor 3  
Toronto, ON M1P 4N7

**Re: McCowan Precinct Plan**

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Dear Yvonne Davies,

On behalf of 1519958 Ontario Limited/Knightstone Capital Management Inc., the owners of the McCowan Square property within the McCowan Precinct, we are writing to formally record our comments regarding the City of Toronto's McCowan Precinct Plan.

On February 18, 2014, City staff hosted a Community Consultation meeting to present the Conceptual Master Plan, and provide a high-level overview of the draft policy initiatives and design strategies that would be included in the Urban Design Guidelines and Official Plan Amendment (OPA) for the McCowan Precinct. On March 4, 2014, we met with Russell Crooks (Senior Planner), Robert Stephens (former Program Manager of Urban Design), and Janet Lee (Urban Designer) to review and discuss the draft materials. Although we were generally supportive of the overall direction of the plan, we raised a small number of concerns, and offered suggested resolutions in a letter to Russell Crooks dated March 21, 2014 (see Attachment 1: Letter from Urban Strategies to Russell Crooks, dated March 21, 2014).

When City staff released the draft Official Plan Amendment on April 23, 2014, we were pleased to find that many of our comments had been considered. However, we would like to reiterate the following comments and concerns for the City's record. For your ease of reference we have referenced the section of the OPA and/or Urban Design Guidelines, outlined our specific comment/concern and in many cases, have provided a suggested resolution for your consideration.

### **Comment 1: Streetscape Requirements along McCowan Road**

**Comment /Concern:** OPA 242 continues to *encourage* a focus of grade-related retail and commercial (office) uses along McCowan Road between Ellesmere and Bushby Drive (OPA 242, Section 4.1). While we continue to have concern about this, we acknowledge that the policy is flexible through its use of the word “encourage”. In contrast, the accompanying Urban Design Guidelines state that in Retail and Commercial Areas “buildings containing retail uses will be designed to allow for their activities to ‘spill out’ onto adjacent public spaces with the provision of wider setback areas where appropriate (Urban Design Guidelines, Section 4.2.b), and further state that “all buildings along the McCowan Road frontage will contain animated uses and architectural features which support pedestrian activity” (Urban Design Guidelines Section 4.4.b). These Guidelines do not represent the same level of flexibility as the Official Plan policy.

The viability of single-loaded retail or commercial activities that front and spill out along this portion of McCowan Road is both questionable and challenging given the context. When the McCowan Precinct Plan was reviewed by the City of Toronto’s Design Review Panel on March 18, 2014, the Panel similarly asked City staff to give consideration to the success and viability of retail along McCowan Road, recognizing its single-loaded nature, and the existing bus traffic.

#### **Requested Resolution:**

- Amend the second point under Section 4.2.b. of the Urban Design Guidelines to read as follows: “*where appropriate*, buildings containing retail uses will be designed to allow for their activities to ‘spill out’ with the provision of wider setback areas.”
- Amend the second point under Section 4.4 b. of the Urban Design Guidelines to read as follows: “*where appropriate*, buildings along the McCowan Road frontage will contain animated uses and architectural features which support pedestrian activity”.

### **Comment 2: Retail Format Restrictions**

**Comment / Concern:** The OPA indicates that “retail uses will be located at grade within residential, employment and public use buildings *where appropriate*. Retail may be

located above grade, at a second storey of a building, provided that a primary, at-grade, street related entrance is provided” (OPA 242, Section 4.1).

Given the proposed Bloor Danforth (No. 2 Line) Subway Extension and the unique changes in grade in this part of the precinct, it should be acknowledged that retail uses may also be appropriate below grade. The provision of prominent entrances to retail areas visible from the street is of course important.

**Requested Resolution:**

- Amend the seventh point under Section 4.1 of OPA 242, and the third point under Section 4.2.b. of the Urban Design Guidelines to read as follows: “retail uses will be located at grade within residential, employment and public use buildings where appropriate, to provide interest and animation to public streets and spaces. Retail uses may be provided in additional locations provided that there are prominent, at-grade, street related entrances.

We appreciate the City’s consideration of our submission. I will be in attendance at Community Council to make a deputation on these matters.

**Yours very truly,**  
URBAN STRATEGIES INC.



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Cyndi Rottenberg-Walker  
Partner, MCIP, RPP

cc: Councillor Glenn De Baeremaeker  
Russell Crooks, Senior Planner, City of Toronto  
Gordon Dreidger, GDREA Inc.  
Knightstone Capital Management Inc.

**Attachment 1:**

**Letter from Urban Strategies to Russell Crooks, dated March 21, 2014**

March 21, 2014

Russell Crooks  
Community Planning, Scarborough District  
Scarborough Civic Centre  
150 Borough Drive  
Toronto, ON M1P 4N7

**Re: McCowan Precinct Plan Study**

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Dear Russell Crooks,

We are writing on behalf of Knightstone Capital, the owner of the McCowan Square property within the McCowan Precinct. We are pleased to submit our initial comments regarding the City of Toronto's Draft McCowan Precinct Plan Study as recently released for public comment.

We are generally supportive of the overall direction and are pleased to see a balanced approach to guide growth and development within the Precinct. We do however wish to articulate the following comments and concerns for the City's record. For your ease of reference we have referenced the section of the Conceptual Master Plan, outlined our specific comment / concern and in many cases, have provided a suggested resolution for your consideration.

**Comment 1: McCowan Road Identified as a "Retail Focused Street"**

**Comment / Concern:** McCowan Road (between Ellesmere and Bushby Drive) is identified as a "retail focused street." The draft urban design guidelines would require buildings located along "retail focused streets" to provide activities that spill out onto adjacent public spaces.

The classification of McCowan Road (between Ellesmere and Bushby Drive) as a "retail focused street" is not appropriate. Since retail opportunities are limited to the east of

McCowan Road, the current Conceptual Master Plan and Urban Design Guidelines would result in single loaded retail uses, which is challenging. Through our discussion with you, we understand that the City's intention here is to create "pedestrian focus" rather than "retail focus."

**Suggested Resolution:** Amend the Conceptual Masterplan by introducing a distinct category called "Pedestrian Focus Streets" and applying it to McCowan Road (between Ellesmere and Bushby Drive).

### **Comment 2: Land Use Guiding Principles**

**Comment / Concern:** The draft materials suggest that retail will only be permitted if it is integrated at grade within a mixed-use employment/residential or public building.

**Suggested Resolution:** The McCowan Precinct is envisioned as a distinct community within the Scarborough Centre and will require a diversity of retail options. Retail should be permitted within a range of built forms typologies to accommodate the diverse needs of its residents, workers and visitors.

### **Comment 3: "Weather Protection"**

**Concerns:** The draft Urban Design Guidelines would require all buildings along major street frontages to provide weather protection in the form of continuous urban canopies, colonnades or substantial building overhangs.

It is important to allow a range of façade treatments along major street frontages to allow the form, scale, proportion, pattern and materials of all building elements to fit within the existing or planned context. Weather protection in the form of canopies, or building overhangs should be encouraged at key building entrances. Weather protection should not be required along the entire façade of buildings along major street frontages, as they may interfere with building elements such as signage or patios spaces.

**Suggested Resolution:** Amend the urban design guidelines for "Weather Protection" by focusing the requirement for canopies or awnings at key entrances along "major streets." The placement of additional weather protection may be considered based on fit with the existing or planned context.

**Comment 4: Alignment of “Proposed Connections” in the Conceptual Master Plan**

**Comment / Concern:** We understand that the street and block patterns illustrated in the Conceptual Master Plan are general and require further testing for development. We understand it is intended to be conceptual.

**Suggested Resolution:** N/A

We look forward to the City’s consideration of our submission. Please inform our office of upcoming dates regarding the processing of the Precinct Plan. We look forward to future discussion with City staff with respect to the content of our submission.

**Yours very truly,**  
URBAN STRATEGIES INC.



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Cyndi Rottenberg-Walker  
Partner, MCIP, RPP



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Christine Fang-Denissov  
Associate, MCIP, RPP

cc: Gordon Dreidger, GDREA Inc.  
Knightstone Capital Management Inc.