



Joe Cressy 周凱捷

City Councillor | Ward 20, Trinity-Spadina

September 21, 2015

EX8.15.10

Executive Committee
Committee Room 1, City Hall
100 Queen St W
Toronto ON M5H 2N2

Dear Mayor Tory and Executive Committee Members,

Re: EX8.15 – 505 Richmond Street West – Proposed YMCA Centre

I am writing this letter in support of the proposal to incorporate a YMCA Centre into the revitalization of the City-owned Waterworks Building at 505 Richmond Street West.

Over the past several months, I have been working in partnership with Build Toronto, YMCA Canada, and City of Toronto staff to move this project forward. This is a unique opportunity to deliver desperately-needed facilities to a rapidly growing area with a shortage of community and recreation spaces. To help achieve this partnership, I will commit existing and future funds from Section 37 community benefits levies to cover up to two-thirds of the capital budget required for YMCA facility.

The King-Spadina area in which this YMCA will be located has grown dramatically in recent years, and more development has been approved or is under construction. When all these approved projects are finished, it has been estimated by City Planning that the King-Spadina area will be home to roughly 40,000 residents. Part of the attraction for new residents is the growing job base in the area within easy walking distance. In turn, employers are locating in King-Spadina to be closer to their labour pool, and it is estimated that the number of jobs will increase from 36,000 today to 57,000 when all approved commercial developments are finished.

But the lack of community facilities in this area will become a serious challenge to the economic vitality, social health, and liveability of the area. The City commissioned a Community Services and Facilities study in 2013 and it was found that nearby community centres have little or no capacity to accommodate further expected growth. Locally-based service agencies are also being squeezed by rising land values and rental rates.

Securing these facilities for King-Spadina is a top priority for me, so I am committing local funding to make it happen. As I have said, up to two-thirds of the capital budget required for the YMCA facility will be covered by existing and future community benefits levies (Section 37 & 45). The remaining third would be the responsibility of YMCA Canada, meaning that no contribution will be required from the City's capital budget. I have reviewed, with City Planning staff, the existing funds available and

additional funds expected based on the development pipeline, and we are confident that funding is available for our share of the project.

An additional attraction of this partnership model is that a YMCA facility would not require ongoing operating subsidy from the City. Rather, the YMCA's "Gym and Swim" financial model is a sustainable way to provide access to those Toronto residents who need assistance. Parks, Forestry & Recreation staff are in ongoing discussions with YMCA Canada regarding appropriate programming and securing adequate access.

I respectfully request that you adopt the staff recommendations and strongly recommend this important project to City Council.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Joe Cressy', with a stylized flourish extending from the bottom.

Joe Cressy
City Councillor
Ward 20, Trinity-Spadina