

Stanley Knowles Housing Co-operative
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David Shiner, Chair
 Planning and Growth Management Committee
 Toronto City Hall
 100 Queen St. W.
 Toronto ON.

May 8, 2015.

Dear Councillor Shiner and members of the Planning and Growth Management Committee:

Re: City-Initiated Proposal to Amend the Official Plan Application No.:15 124713 SPS 00 OZ
Location of Application: Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan area

The Stanley Knowles Housing Co-operative has been an integral part of the Midtown in Focus Public Realm Study since its inception. We are writing to express our support for its recommendations and for the extension of the study to include issues of built form and growth pressures. In this letter I will highlight issues of particular importance to our Co-op community.

Let me begin by pointing out that this is an extremely time sensitive matter. Midtown is a community under siege by developers and, unless appropriate regulatory statements are adopted into the Secondary Plan for this area in short order, it will be too late to implement many of the recommendations of the Public Realm Study, never mind any beneficial recommendations that may be forthcoming in an extension of the study.

I will focus on three aspects of the Public Realm Study which have particular importance to Stanley Knowles residents

1. Midtown Parks, Open Space and Streetscape Plans: 5 Place-Making Moves

The majority of residents at Stanley Knowles are seniors, people of modest means and/or people with mobility issues who do not own cars. The area surrounding Yonge and Eglinton is the community in which they need to live, shop and have access to leisure/recreational space. We support the recommendations contained in this section of the study, especially those that would create public green spaces in the streetscape such as the *Yonge Street Squares* and the *Park Street Loop*. The specific requirements for larger set backs at street level are necessary to achieve this vision. In addition, as the population ages, the need for wider sidewalks to accommodate mobility assist devices will become more prevalent. Provision of shade and seating will also become increasingly important. The need for a speedy implementation of these recommendations can be seen in the example of *Redpath Revisited*. The original vision for Redpath's improvement, presented early in the process of the **Public Realm Study** has already

been compromised by large developments on this street some of which have been approved and two others which are in the application process.

2. Impact of Private Development on the Public Realm

We heartily endorse the importance of requiring developers to provide on their own properties for the passenger, service, maintenance, and delivery vehicle needs of the development. Creation of more below grade parking is an essential component of beautifying our streets while providing support for local businesses. The building of the Eglinton Crosstown transit line will provide an ideal opportunity to create below grade parking and pedestrian pathways. This opportunity must not be missed. Co-ordination and shared access of the vehicle services needs of neighbouring buildings

We recommend that consideration should be given to addressing problems created by ill-advised service vehicle arrangements of existing buildings such as Rio Can's system of truck deliveries on both Duplex and Orchard View which poses traffic safety issues for both motorists and pedestrians. And the unsightly garbage bins on Orchard View.

In cases where there is a public-private partnership in the creation of public space, it is important that the City obtain secure comprehensive easements of these spaces in order to ensure that the green space remains public and that the city has the right to make changes such as the creation of public walkways or other measures that may be required. For example on the east side of the E-condo, this condominium is required to provide an easement in favour of the City (the public) and to build and maintain the walkway to the specifications of the City.

3. Section 37 Implementation Priorities

We wish to make it clear that the continued and expanded renovation of Eglinton Park and improvements to the Library/Helendale area are our first priorities in the use of future Section 37 funds and Parks levies and contributions.

Moving forward – Extending the scope of the study

Stanley Knowles supports the extension of the study to include issues of built form and growth pressures. There is much more planning required to ensure the successful outcome of YE's redevelopment. Once again a quick response will be necessary if we are to have any hope of achieving benefits from the recommendations that will emerge from this phase of the study. Otherwise the pace of development will destroy our ability to plan for it effectively and preserve the character and best qualities of our community.

There are many issues of interest and concern to our residents as we consider this next phase. I will limit my comments to 3 issues of primary concern in the **2015 Planning Priorities**.

1. The most important and pressing of these is Planning's intention to "*... undertake a review of existing conditions to understand the **hard and soft infrastructure needs and identify gaps to fill in anticipation of growth***" (pg. 32 of **Midtown In Focus Implementation & 2015 Planning Priorities; Public Meeting; March 23, 2015**)

We in the Midtown community need to know how much more development this area can sustain and developers also need to know this to plan and invest wisely. The key component in this

question is understanding the current state of our infrastructure and its ability to serve the present population and the increased population that will be generated by developments already approved. Will this infrastructure support the projected growth in the study, **Towers Forecast**, produced by local community planner, Terry Mills? How much more will be required in support, how will it be put in place and how will it be paid for? I include in the category infrastructure support issues like space or lack of same in local schools, congestion on the Yonge line and at Eglinton line and crowded side streets and sidewalks.

2. **Growth Analysis and Build Form Study**

The greatest priorities for us include the **protection of stable neighbourhoods** and establishment of directions as to the type of development necessary and desirable for this area. We are already experiencing 'townhouse creep' where a multi-unit townhouse complex is proposed for location in a stable neighbourhood when it does not respect the character or nature of that neighbourhood, contrary to the City's Official Plan.

Another very important requirement is **that development should incorporate a balance of residential, retail and office/commercial facilities**. This is consistent with the OP's directive that development should contribute to a "complete community" where residents can live, shop and work. The Official Plan Amendment 231 passed by Council reinforces the importance of this concept. Unfortunately this amendment has been bogged down in an OMB appeal but we cannot use this as an excuse to delay necessary planning. Planning needs to need to proceed with addressing this issue, win lose or draw.

In the summary of comments by community members in attendance at the March 23 Public Meeting, David Ticoll of Quantum Owners and Residents Association raises many good points. One of these that are of special concern to Stanley Knowles residents is the need for developers to include residential units of various sizes to accommodate families, as well as singles and couples. We share Mr. Ticoll's concern that the trend to the majority of units being small, does not reflect the diversity and housing needs of our community and will lead to the eventual destabilization of our community.

3. Not raised in **Midtown in Focus Implementation & 2015 Planning Priorities; Public Meeting; March 23, 2015**, is the issue of affordable housing. As a non-profit housing co-operative, SKHC maintains that this form of housing is both necessary and practicable, and is committed to increased affordable housing. The shortage of affordable housing has reached desperate levels in Toronto. This is an issue that needs to be addressed by all levels of government. However, the city needs to move forward to do its share to create solutions. We recommend all developments should be responsible for delivering affordable housing beyond Section 37 benefits, to help alleviate this crisis in our city. This could take the form of every development being required to provide a certain number of affordable units or cash in lieu.

I would be remiss if I did not recognize and express appreciation for their contributions to this process to the following groups and individuals who are committed to seeing the Midtown community develop in a rational and sustainable way to become an example of best practices in planning and a safe and comfortable home to residents present and future:

- Members of City Planning and Urban Design
- Councillors Robinson, Carmichael-Greb, former Councillor Stintz and Councillor Matlow. Special thanks to Councillor Matlow for taking the lead in this work
- Ian Malczewski, Swerhun Facilitation
- Terry Mills, Arris Studio
- Community Representative on the Midtown Planning Advisory Group

Respectfully submitted

C. Ann King

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Chair, Community Liaison Committee
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