

EX15.2.2

# Memo

To: Mr. John Tory, Chair of Executive Committee

From: Matias de Dovitiis, Executive Director, DUKE Heights BIA

CC: Councillor Perruzza

Date: May 18, 2016

Re: Item EX 15.2 Toronto Ward Boundary Review

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On March 7<sup>th</sup>, 2016 our BIA, DUKE Heights, sent a letter that requested for the BIA to be maintained in a single ward, because some draft recommendation possibilities had our area split into two. We did this because we noted that our BIA district has almost no residential foot print and therefore has little weight in terms of the political map distribution formula. Unfortunately, while staff agree that this was the case and which Ward the BIA was placed on was inconsequential to the overall population weight of any Ward, the report recommends for the BIA to be added in its entirety into a new ward. The changes will have a negative impact on the development of our BIA, and our employment and public realm improvement projects.

Our newly named BIA is the second biggest in North America. We represent over 2,500 businesses, 30,000 employees and over \$2 Billion dollars' worth of commercial and industrial real estate. The boundaries of our BIA go from Steeles Ave. W. to Sheppard Ave. W. and from Keele St. to Dufferin St.

Moving the BIA outside of Ward 8 will make the development of our partnerships with Seneca College and York University unnecessarily difficult. We recently published a study to whose objective is to spur employment growth, which was done in partnership with the with the City of Toronto's Economic Development. The study can be found here: <http://www.dukeheights.ca/wp-content/uploads/DUKE-Heights-Economic-Development-Study-and-Executive-Summary-FINAL-2016....pdf>.

One of the biggest recommendations from the report, and one recommendation we

are following closely, is to build partnerships with post-secondary institutions in order to develop entrepreneurial and educational opportunities. In order to develop this plan, we have begun a partnership with the Economics Department at York University, the York University Experience Hub, the York University Experiential Education Program, and have developed a partnership with YEDI, a business accelerator that is partnered with the Schulich School of Business and is found within the BIA boundaries. We have also met with a number of other stakeholders, such as Seneca College's President, York University's student union and others. The point is that we are doing a significant amount of work to develop employment and training programs that would bridge the academic institutions in Ward 8 with our over 2,500 businesses. The BIA would continue to benefit from being on the same ward as York University and Seneca College. There are countless benefits to this being the case and little consequence for this not being done.



**MAP OF DUKE HEIGHTS BIA: Showing boundary with York University.**

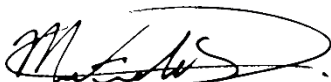
York University and its Seneca College campus share with us their entire eastern boundary on Keele Street. In fact, we share a 1.5 km strip of Keele Street on which we are planning to do a tremendous amount of work over the next 2 to 5 years and this work would be hampered if the ward boundary ran down Keele Street and we had to deal with the jurisdictional issues that always slow these type of endeavors.

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This is in effect, York University's main access point and it is also an important element of our future public realm studies. We began the first of a series of public realm studies for our main roads in 2015 and are planning to begin public realm improvements in our boundary with York University in 2017.

Our BIA supports the notion that whatever boundary changes occur in over the next electoral cycle would need to keep the entirety of our BIA within the political boundaries of one Ward, and staff agree with this, but we also need to be in the same ward as York University. For this fact and its importance alone, we are requesting City of Toronto Council to add the entirety of the BIA district into Ward 8. We hope that this can be remedied promptly.

Sincerely,



Matias de Dovitiis  
Executive Director