



Joe Cressy 周凱捷

City Councillor | Ward 20, Trinity-Spadina

February 19, 2015

Toronto and East York Community Council
Committee Room 1, City Hall
100 Queen St W
Toronto ON M5H 2N2

Dear Chair and Members,

Re: Spadina-Peter-Adelaide-Richmond (SPAR) Block

Jane Jacobs famously wrote that "new ideas must use old buildings" and the dramatic revitalization of King-Spadina over recent decades has demonstrated the truth of this observation. From a derelict warehouse district, the neighbourhood was repurposed by artists and entrepreneurs who built networks of support and knowledge-sharing for unique and innovative endeavors that defied contemporary definition or expectation.

At the heart of a block that sustains this spirit today, 401 Richmond is a historic warehouse home to over 140 cultural producers and microenterprises. The intense mixing of a wide variety of people and practices in a single building fuels creativity and produces unexpected results. The block is also home to several warehouses that have been repurposed as commercial offices. The ecosystem of creativity extends beyond 401 Richmond in part thanks to the pedestrian-scale built form and public realm that invites people to regularly travel outside their own studio, office, or workshop.

There are also two recent proposals for new condominium towers by the property owners at the east end of the block. One of these has already been submitted as a re-zoning application. The City needs to move urgently within its power to protect and enhance the characteristics of this block that make it such a valuable asset to the neighbourhood's vibrancy and our City's cultural life.

Recommendations:

The Director Community Planning, Toronto and East York District

1. Reach out to property owners on the SPAR block to discuss opportunities to work together to improve public realm, mid-block connections, and create new green space;
2. Develop a public realm plan for the SPAR block to help guide development proposals and inform the ongoing review of King-Spadina's East Precinct.
3. Present the outcome of the above Recommendations to the local community in consultation with the Ward councillor.

Sincerely,

Joe Cressy
City Councillor
Ward 20, Trinity-Spadina