

North York Community Council

From: Brad Teichman <bteichman@overlandllp.ca>
Sent: Tuesday, December 13, 2016 6:24 PM
To: Planning and Growth Management Committee; 'slevy@postmedia.com'; 'scooplevy@rogers.com'; North York Community Council; Councillor Augimeri
Subject: Sheppard Avenue Commercial Area Secondary Plan Review
Attachments: Scanned from Printer.pdf

To: Chair and Members of Planning and Growth Management Committee of Toronto, Attention: Mr. Josh Colle, Chair

To: Chair and Members of North York Community Council, Attention: Ms. Maria Augimeri, Chair

To: Ms. Sue-Ann Levy, Toronto Sun

Re: Sheppard Avenue Commercial Area Secondary Plan Review

We live in extraordinarily exciting times in a city that is rapidly maturing. Growth and prosperity are abundant, but at the same time, pressures on City building have never been more apparent. For the first time, the City has recognized that tolls are being considered as a means to fund needed public infrastructure projects, let alone maintenance of the existing system.

However, in Ward 23, growth has been artificially suppressed for many years leaving this area of the City lagging far behind in both required infrastructure improvements and a modern planning vision.

Why you ask? All because the local councillor, John Filion, has assumed the role of both politician and planning director in steering the vision for this area to maintain a "sixties" type appearance. This is quite apparent if you consider the recent Sheppard Avenue Commercial Area Secondary Plan Review.

While Councillor Filion has on every project along this stretch of the City (running east and west of Yonge Street on the Sheppard corridor) extended notice of site specific development applications to a wider geographic area than mandated under the governing legislation, only relatively few concerned individuals often attend public and community meetings (and in many cases the same 15-20 faces appear almost like there is a following). In contrast, a recent petition circulated by a ratepayers organization which concerns the Sheppard Avenue Corridor Area Secondary Plan has garnished the support of 510 households (which represent over 1,500 local individuals within the same geographic area of circulation supported by Councillor Filion).

The petition is quite clear: the residents want a contemporary planning regime to provide a catalyst for growth (and growth brings infrastructure improvements paid by the development industry), implementation of the TTC's Line 4 (which can only occur with growth and density) and the implementation of the planned 36 metre right-of-way width for Sheppard Avenue to eliminate the congested bottle neck caused by the conscious decision not to implement the long standing road width.

This begs the real question of how should City building occur. Should it be left to the whim of the local politicians or should it be the decision of the Planning and Growth Management Committee?

The purpose of this letter is to request your attention in bringing this situation to light for the betterment of this stretch of the City, and also to highlight how City building decisions should not be left to a few

local and vocal residents who have caught the ear of the local politicians. Not in my backyard syndrome is not the way to bring about required change, required growth and required infrastructure improvements.

Would you please review the attached letter which is provided by Sheppard West Lansing Area Rate Payers Association.

Thank you for your consideration.

Brad Teichman

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December 09, 2016

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NOT IN MY WARD

In some wards around the City, growth is synonymous with destruction. This could not be any clearer than Ward 23, where the local councillor is determined to continue the planning framework and built form to resemble the existing fabric, more or less a 1960's retro appearance with low rise residential developments, no at grade retail to animate the street. No wonder every development along Sheppard Avenue, east and west of Yonge Street is being vehemently opposed by Councillor Filion. It doesn't meet his retro vision.

On November 15th, the North York Community Council considered the Final Report on the Sheppard Avenue Commercial Area Secondary Plan (a City initiated Official Plan Amendment) to (supposedly) update the Sheppard Avenue Commercial Area Secondary Plan. This is the first phase of a two phase planning review. The second phase will review the same Secondary Plan on the east side of Yonge Street.. For context purposes, when the City adopted its new Official Plan in 2002 following amalgamation, the Sheppard Avenue Commercial Area Secondary Plan was incorporated into the new Official Plan without review, on purpose and on the direction of the Local Councillor. This is in contrast to many other Secondary Plans that were reviewed as part of the amalgamation exercise.

So why is there such a disconnect between the property owners/developers along Sheppard Avenue (east and west) and the vision of the Local Councillor? It could be as simple as who carries more votes. There is certainly a requirement to ensure any intensification along Sheppard Avenue, a designated growth area, be sensitive to abutting neighbourhoods. There are multiple examples throughout the City where such integration has been very successful and planning peace has been achieved. The existing Sheppard Avenue Commercial Area Secondary Plan is close to 20 years old. Since its original adoption, there have been no less than three *Planning Act* reviews and amendments, two Provincial Policy Statement reviews, the Growth Plan and the Big Move Regional Transportation Plan. So the development industry is quite correct in signalling via site-specific development applications that the planning status quo is inadequate.

The most current planning review conducted by the City in the Final Report on the Sheppard Avenue Commercial Area Secondary Plan simply continues the status quo. In fact, the City's Planning Staff recommendations were pre-determined with the Local Councillor Filion's resolution in 2011 which started the review in the first instance. The trigger and catalyst for the review was a rezoning application for a property at 258-262 Sheppard Avenue West that resulted in a 6-storey built form. This then became the model child for all development applications along Sheppard Avenue, east and west of Yonge Street – six storeys. It even was the parameter of the resolution to start a review to establish regulations that would permit similar developments. So after almost seven years (78 months to be exact – an extended period of time to not advance an important planning study), the results of the review are entirely the same as the original outdated resolution.

At the North York Community Council Meeting on November 15, 2016, two local residents petitioned the neighbourhood to determine whether the City's vision is consistent with the predominant view of those residing in the area. 510 household signatures were collected and presented (representing well over 1500 residents) who do not wish to retain the status quo. They are calling for:

1. The widening of Sheppard Avenue West to its 36 metre planned roadway width;
2. Recognition of the contribution the existing transit infrastructure provides and acknowledgement of the future potential for a subway connection along Sheppard Avenue West between Downsview Park with the Yonge subway stations; and,
3. To provide a policy basis and vision that promotes and encourages the redevelopment of this area into a mixed-use form (with below grade parking) between 8 to 12 storeys with complimentary at-grade commercial uses to enhance the streetscape with uses such as: coffee shops; banks; retail stores; restaurants; drug stores; and medical offices.

This petition is growing each day.

On the same North York Community Council Agenda on November 15, 2016, the Phase 1 Report for the “Keele Finch Plus – Encouraging Growth and Community Building” report was presented. This report is about comprehensive planning, about updating a planning framework to encourage growth and community building, and about tools to leverage nearby investment in rapid transit. A deeper analysis of this report reveals that the Planning Department provided an in-depth discussion on Provincial Growth Plan, the importance of the Big Move Regional Transportation Plan, which identifies major transit stations areas as the area within a 500 metre radius of a rapid transit station, and the need to plan to achieve increased residential and employment densities that support and ensure the viability of existing and planned transit service levels. Mobility hubs extend 800 metres from the intersection of two or more rapid transit lines. It is incumbent, as the Report indicates, upon the City to interpret these guidelines and apply them in land use considerations in order to achieve the identified goals.

These important planning considerations that were so well detailed in the Finch Study were overlooked by the same Planning Department that authored the Secondary Plan report. Is this a coincidence?

Growth for growth purposes is obviously not appropriate in all locations. However, when you combine the lack of growth interests of a local councillor with the voices of a few local residents, then we have to be thankful that the Ontario Municipal Board is still around.

If you have any questions please contact our representative, lawyer Brad Teichman at (416) 730-0180 or bteichman@overlandllp.ca

Thank you for your consideration.

Members of the Association + 1500 residents