

## ARMENIAN COMMUNITY CENTRE

**45 Hallcrown Plac, Toronto, ON M2J 4Y4** Tel: 416-491-2900

To ; members of the Planning & Growth Management committee

City of Toronto

From: The Armenian Community Centre

St Mary Armenian Apostolic Church

ARS Daycare and School

Re : Community Comments on the “Consumersnext Study” and consultants report &

2450 Victoria Park Ave. designated as Mixed use site, OPA 231

Ladies and Gentlemen,

The Armenian Community complex and cultural platform is located at 45 & 50 Hallcrown place, at the intersection of Hwy 401 and Victoria Park Ave, off of consumers Rd., on two property parcels over 6 Acres in area. The community was established in the Consumers Rd. Employment area back in 1979, when it was relocated to the new community centre from Dupont and Avenue Rd. The Community went through vigorous growth over the last 38 years by going through 4 construction phases; a community centre, Daycare and School from Kindergarten to Grade 12, church structure, and a youth centre, with 500 seat theater and sports facilities. The complex is currently over 110,000 sq. Ft. And plans are being prepared for an addition of 15,000 sq ft in the short term and Major construction projects at 50 Hallcrown Place as a long term plan.

First Armenian immigrants have arrived in Ontario in 1890's and early 1900 and in 1923 a group of 110 orphaned children, survivors of the Armenian Genocide, arrived in Georgetown, Ontario, as Canada's first humanitarian experience. The first Armenian Church in Toronto was built in 1930s on Woodlawn Ave. at Yonge and Summerhill, and the first community centre was opened in early 1960s. Currently there are 4 Churches and two community centres located along Sheppard Ave. from Bathurst to Markham Rd. And one church in the 905 Area along 404 at 14<sup>th</sup> Ave, serving educational, cultural and spiritual needs of a 30,000 active and engaged community.

As a healthy individual's contribute to the benefit of his community, his city and the Country, so is the contributions of a healthy communities to the benefit of their city, province and the country both economically and immeasurable cultural enrichment. The privately run Armenian community school with over 600 students, and the daycare facility, saves the city and the province in educational cost and subsidies in excess of \$10,000,000 annually.

The Armenian Community of Toronto had a great impact during the Syrian refugee crisis, in 2015 and 2016, by privately sponsoring about 2,800 refugees at almost no cost to the city, the Province and The Canadian Government, Saving in excess of \$ 30 million in relocation costs.

We strongly believe that building communities are not just brick and mortar, nor they are condo towers and commercial plazas. well functioning, efficient and productive communities are based on marrying good education, with integrated cultural exposure and pleasant neighbourhoods. We realize that our city, City of Toronto, is growing through growing pains, and we are not against this growth, but it has to be measured, logical and compatible with the surrounding structural mix, without being offensive and intrusive. The Consumersnext study commissioned by the City of Toronto, and contribution of the consultants and the planning staff are commendable, however, they do not effectively address our community concerns, not only as members of the Armenian Community centre, but residents of the surrounding neighbourhoods of Wishing Well, Brian Village, Chichester and Huntingwood. The following community concerns are of particular importance and requires additional attention and accommodation:

- a. Traffic conditions: Traffic conditions along Consumers Road, and the Victoria Park Ave intersection has been an issue since 1980s. In fact, the reason why the Armenian Community Centre was invited to locate here by then Mayor of North York, His Worship Mel Lastman, was to avoid construction of a second office building proposed for the site at 45 Hallcrown Place, due to traffic congestions at rush hours. The ARS school Board, and the Community centre representatives, have discussed this issue with our local councillors and the city for the last 10-15 years. The school relies on the parents for drop off and pick up the students, and it takes the parents currently over 15-20 minutes to get in and out of the school property during the rush hours. Any additional development commercial, mixed use or otherwise without addressing the traffic issues first will jeopardise survival of the school. As faced with additional delays due to the traffic conditions, will push the working parents to pull their kids out of the school when the conditions become unbearable.

b.

We feel that although the consultants have recommended construction of a new road north of the church, however there is no assurance that; i) the road construction will be a precondition to any development, particularly large development as foreseen for 2450 Victoria Park Ave., ii) the ramp to 401 West has to be normalized by MOT and the new road connected to the Victoria Park Ave. with proper directional traffic signs. Iii) Anticipated additional traffic generated due to the new road will necessitate to study widening of Hallcrown Place, which is not addressed in the study; iv) option B is not provided in case MOT does not accept the proposed normalization of the ramp. This option could be considered as widening Hallcrown Place and Consumers road to create a dedicated right lane to 401 thus doubling the capacity at the City of Toronto's option v) If Hallcrown Place is not widened however, all access to the new development should be via Consumers Road.

b. Safety and security of the students have been a major concern for the staff and the parents, as they walk to the neighbouring plazas and shops during their breaks and lunch. With excessive intensification, and additional traffic generated during all hours of the day, the safety issue becomes a major concern.

c. Build Form: Although the community centre is not too keen in having mixed use designation on the south side of Consumers Road, our focus is now to insure that there is a reasonable and measured development, consistent with the planning principals and compatible with the adjacent buildings and build forms. The church is an architectural gem based on Millennium old Armenian Architecture, using modern construction materials. Designed by the Architectural/Engineering team of the Toronto Sky dome, Cedric Robby/Adjeleian, the structure should be central focal point to any development surrounding it, visible from all directions of approach to the intersection. Open spaces and step up building features should be used in the vicinity of the structure. Although the density recommendation of the consultant for the neighbourhood, featured in a table seems to be generally acceptable, however, to maintain the balance of the structures and integrity of the neighbourhood on both sides of Victoria Park Ave., the coverage should not exceed 2.5 times, primarily to avoid drastic changes in build form in an employment designated area. After all Victoria Park is a secondary avenue and considerable distance from Sheppard Ave. Transit Corridor. Furthermore, in determining building heights, rather than focusing on the avenue frontage alone, frontages on other streets should be considered to avoid build form visual clashes.

- d. Existing Infrastructure: Although infrastructure in and around consumers Road employment area has been undergoing upgrades since 2008 in anticipation of further developments, yet insufficient capacity to handle major developments is questioned. There has been at least a few flooding and power issues at the Consumers Rd and Hallcrown Place intersection, which has necessitated closure of the school and the Church/community centre. Unless appropriate Engineering studies are conducted to fairly allow for future developments of the other property owners, particularly employment enhancing developments, Residential component of any mixed use developments should be appropriately measured. The community has current expansion plans, and will be seeking site plan approval for future additional commercial development at 50 Hallcrown Place. Consumers Road employment neighbourhood is an enclosed neighbourhood surrounded with major highways ( 401 & 404) and access ramps on 21/2 sides, with limited access and egress to the major roads. Recent developments and buildings at the Sheppard Ave E./Consumers, and another huge development at Yorkland and Sheppard, and planned developments at Sheppard Ave. and Victoria Park Node and anticipated development proposal for the corner of Consumers Rd. / Victoria Park, the employment area will suffocate with traffic jam, with no hope of recovery.

We are appealing to the Planning and Growth Management committee with this submission, to consider our comments to amend the consultant's report to give appropriate weight to the important contributions of communities to the economy and the social fabric of the neighbourhoods and the City of Toronto. If developers build buildings, communities create the future Generations. Appropriately merging the two is every ones responsibility.

Submitted on behalf of :

<b>Armenian Community Centre</b>	Chairman, Board Of Directors	Janbazian Hagop
<b>ARS School and Daycare</b>	Chairman of School Board	Kupelian Sevag
<b>St Mary Armenian Apostolic Church</b>	Chairman, Board of Trustees	Kassabian Harout
	Spiritual Leader	Father Kusbekian Keghart

**Main Organizations Operation at the Community centre:**

Armenian Relief Society

Armenian Sports union ( HMEM), Boy scouts and Girl guides

Armenian Cultural Association ( Hamazkayin ), choir and Dance Groups

Armenian Youth Federation and Junior Group

Armenian Seniors Association