

July 18, 2018

Mayor John Tory and Members of Toronto City Council
Toronto City Hall
100 Queen Street West
Toronto, Ontario
M5H 2N2

Dear Mayor Tory and Members of Toronto City Council,

**RE: PLANNING AND GROWTH COMMITTEE CONSIDERATION - JULY 5, 2018 MIDTOWN IN
FOCUS: FINAL REPORT PG 31.7**

We are the West Brownlow Association, a group of homeowners who own some of the residential freehold townhomes on the west side of Brownlow Avenue, ranging from 54 to 76 Brownlow Avenue (the "Brownlow Property"). We are in the "Soudan Apartment Neighbourhood", just south of Eglinton and north of Soudan.

We are long-time residents of the area (some over 40 years), with kids in the local school system, and with plans to stay at Yonge/Eglinton long after the Crosstown is completed.

We previously made a submission to the Committee, dated June 25, 2018, requesting that the allowable height for the Brownlow Property remain at 23 floors as recommended by the City Planners in both their May 2018 Recommended Plan and the Modified November 2017 Proposed Plan.

Unfortunately, at the Planning and Growth Committee's July 5, 2018 meeting, an "Option 3" was unexpectedly presented and approved that was not the recommended option of the City Planners, arbitrarily slashed allowable heights across the board to 15 floors in the "Soudan Apartment Neighbourhood", and seems to be based on the results of one community meeting 8 business days before the July 5th Committee vote, thus dramatically overturning years of formalized review and consultations.

We strongly disagree with this for the reasons below and request that the allowable height be increased back to the 23 floors as recommended by the City Planning department.

We appreciate the work that both the Planning and Growth Committee and the City Planners have done to date, and how it can be difficult to balance the often-contradictory requests of the various stakeholders in the Yonge Eglinton community with the objectives of the Official Plan.

And we are in strong agreement with many of the Committee recommendations from the July 5, 2018 meeting, specifically that significant focus and resources must be directed towards ensuring that the infrastructure, transit and education needs of the area are met to support the targeted growth in the Official Plan. Both levels of government must agree that without this, then there can be no real plan.

Assuming these needs will be addressed, we don't understand the necessity for "Option 3", which will essentially freeze new development in the "Soudan Apartment Neighborhood" for the coming years.

The “Soudan Apartment Neighborhood” is bounded by Yonge, Eglinton, Mount Pleasant and Soudan. This area is about 2M square feet, or 35 football fields. Our property lies within this area, and we believe we may be the only residential homeowners remaining (along with our townhouse neighbors ranging from 61-75 Brownlow Avenue across the street).

Together with these neighbors, we only represent 3% of this total area, so only a tiny fraction remains undeveloped. Everything else residential is either condos, apartments or land bought by developers.

On our specific block:

- To the north, almost touching our rear property, is a 30-story condo nearing completion
- In our backyard, steps south, is a 21-story condo,
- South of that will be a 21-story rental building on Soudan that will start construction soon.

“Option 3” just approved by Council also provides for a 23-story building on Mount Pleasant directly east of us; when built this will block any light from the east.

And at the south end of Brownlow on the northwest corner with Soudan, there is a current application in with the city to build a 25-story extension to a retirement home.

When all this is complete, we will be a canyon surrounded by density.

This surrounding density will continue to reduce the quality of life on our street and our property values as residential living spaces. And now, this arbitrary reduction in floors basically freezes the likelihood of any future development potential and further penalizes us. While none of us want to move, we feel we will eventually be forced to sell to a developer. We are simply asking that should that happen, that the number of floors allowed on the land be consistent with what is around us.

We also believe our request is very consistent with other aspects of the official plan:

- The Brownlow Property is only 50 meters from Eglinton, so lowering the height even more like in “Option 3” is inconsistent with having higher density buildings near Eglinton and pursuing what a city planner called “transitioning heights down” from major roads like Eglinton.
- The Brownlow Property will be only a 150-meter walk to the proposed Mount Pleasant/Eglinton subway and within the Secondary Transit Zone, so lowering heights like in “Option 3” would be inconsistent with having higher density near LRT/Subway entrances

We also have some concerns with how the process of lowering heights and “Option 3” came about:

- We were surprised that City Planning Reports, that were years in the making and that went through a rigorous analytic and consultative process to generate and recommend what became known as “Option 1”, were suddenly and significantly overhauled into “Option 3” in a 2-week period based on one community meeting in June. “Option 1” and “Option 3” seem so different it’s hard to believe they are part of the same overall report. This would seem to suggest that there was not near enough time taken to properly analyze and recommend “Option 3”. Some of the math to support it seemed inconsistent in parts. It seems to us if 20% of the tall building floors were reduced by 50%, then the resulting number of floors would be 10% fewer than under Option 1, leading to a density drop far greater than suggested in the Midtown in Focus

supplementary report. We wonder if enough time was given to ensure that the provincial plans were adhered to. Also, its speed in implementation gave other community stakeholders little time or notice to provide comment on a change so significant. And the community meeting itself seemed relatively informal: there was no official sign in sheet, the voting form for options didn't require a name, and there seemed to be many people that were not from the area.

- The June 21 community meeting that triggered "Option 3" (as well as the July 5 Committee meeting) seemed largely influenced by Councilor Robinson, who in her own submission has asked for a moratorium on new development applications. This suggests that the results of this meeting were not truly objective regarding hearing views from all neighborhood stakeholders. It's worth noting that Councilor Robinson is not the councilor for the "Soudan Apartment Neighbourhood".
- At the July 5 meeting Committee meeting, we were surprised in the manner that "Option 1", the option recommended by City Planners, was disregarded. As noted by Councilor Perks, usually Committees are presented with a staff recommendation that they either agree or disagree with. In this case, they were presented with three options, of which only "Option 1" was the City Planner's recommendation. We were further surprised that discussion on this matter was then halted and happened off camera as there seemed to be concerns about potential litigation about not following City Planner advice.
- The results from the June 21 community meeting, whose premise was to get feedback on lowering heights, is hardly surprising. Many resident attendees complained about the dirt and disruption in the area. We too are tired of this; it has been going on for years and will likely continue for years to come. But we understand much of this is transitory and to be expected when the city is building a major transit hub and a crosstown LRT that will benefit the entire city, as well as providing local residents long term benefits including being steps from a new subway line and increased area property values.

In conclusion, we would ask that the allowable heights for the Brownlow Property remain at 23 floors as originally recommended by the City Planning department in both their May 2018 Recommended Plan and the Modified November 2017 Proposed Plan.

Thank you for the opportunity to express our comments and consider our view.

Best Regards,



Jim Woodside
West Brownlow Residents Association

cc: Karen Boctor
Linda Cooper
Carolyn Evely
James Little
Tomiko Murk
Walter Murk