

HARBORD VILLAGE RESIDENTS' ASSOCIATION

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Toronto, ON M5S 1X1



To Planning and Growth Management Committee
PG29.4

Dear Committee Members:

April 30, 2018.

Harbord Village Residents' Association serves an area that is bounded by College, Bathurst, Bloor and Spadina. Our association has participated in TOCore consultations. The TOCore plan sets out a blueprint for realizing the future Downtown, without losing the elements that today make this part of the City great. It has amassed enormous amounts of data that will serve to guide City planning in the next decades. We have particular concerns about the ongoing level of protection for neighbourhoods, in particular development that might be proposed within 500 m. of a transit node. Much of our neighbourhood could be impacted by this intensification. We also note Harbord Street is included in Mixed Use 3, the width of the right-of-way. We think a more appropriate height for a low-rise commercial main street internal to a community would be Mixed Use 4, as no buildings presently are more than 3 storeys.

What is most significant to Harbord Village is the understanding that the drafters have shown in realizing that the plan is just a first step in shaping the City to come. We are particularly impressed with the recommendations around ongoing pilot projects.

Consider parks. We are a dense Victorian community that is notably deficient in park space, with a community ethic that is devoted to the preservation and enhancement of the urban forest. Our most recent inventory counted 4,000 trees in a kilometer square neighbourhood—most of them on private land.

The TOCore plan sets out impressive City level greenspace goals, but, even more encouraging and progressive, it also recognizes the need to transform smaller neighbourhood spaces.

Our challenge is this: in many Downtown neighbourhoods parkspace acquisition is out of the question. For the children in our neighbourhood, the park where they play is actually the front street. Is this something that can be built on? We have seen unused land become an urban park in the Bentway. Could the same kind of thinking change our neighbourhoods? Our internal streets are about 20% of our land area. Are local streets actually unrealized public realm benefits? Are there more naturally adaptive ways to calm and handle traffic and parking?

We hope we are correct in seeing the TOCore proposal for pilot studies in chapter 7 as being a way neighbourhoods such as ours could collaborate with the City to transform our inner neighbourhood streets so they are walkable, green, playable, and places of sanctuary. They can contribute to the green infrastructure, improve mobility, retain stormwater, ameliorate heat island effects, and provide health ecosystem connectivity.

With thousands of citizens moving into the Downtown, our neighbourhood streets are a resource we can't afford to ignore.

With thanks

Sue Dexter
Harbord Village Residents' Association