

The Republic Residents' Association Position Paper re: Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan

June 4, 2018

The Republic Residents' Association (RRA) represents the residents of the two Republic towers at 25 Broadway Avenue and 70 Roehampton Avenue and the families of students attending North Toronto Collegiate Institute (NTCI) attached to the residential towers and part of a single redevelopment project. Through our Association's leadership, we have participated in the Midtown in Focus planning over the course of the few past years. The efforts of the City of Toronto planning staff to engage the community and offer codified, implementable improvements to our neighbourhood are duly appreciated. There are broad policy statements, objectives and planning strategies proposed within the documents of the Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan that our group can fully endorse. We all wish to live in safe, complete communities that are accessible, green, well-connected and supported by the requisite infrastructure and complement of community services. The Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan will not, in our Association's considered opinion, provide in our apartment neighbourhood, for a complete, livable community, which is the primary purpose of the Secondary Plan.

Accordingly, our Association is writing to formally object to the Yonge-Eglinton Secondary Plan in its current form, in particular as it pertains to the Permitted Building Types and Height Limits provided on the drawing Map 21-12 dated April 18, 2018. If approved, this map will affirm allowable densities in the Yonge-Eglinton Centre in the name of intensification for a Growth Centre, which is unacceptable to our Association.

The area around the Yonge Eglinton Centre, which includes the two streets, Broadway Avenue and Roehampton Avenue, where our two condominium buildings are located, has experienced disproportionate growth compared to other areas of the city in the past 10 years. The report, Community Services and Facilities Strategy, states on page 11, "This concentration of residents and workers **far exceeds** the Growth Plan's minimum growth targets for the area." Indeed as residents of this area who experience life here on a daily basis, we would argue, as many did at the Midtown in Focus meeting on May 28, 2018, that we have already passed a 'tipping point' in our neighbourhood, in terms of services, infrastructure and quality of life. No other already mature area in the city has experienced the level of intensification that our area has, and will, over the next 10-15 years. Equivalent high-density areas in the city (e.g. City Place) have been planned around large parks and supportive new infrastructure.

Without delving into lengthy line-by-line detail, there are many passages throughout all of the supporting Midtown in Focus documents that confirm qualitatively and quantitatively that our area, at this time represents "the highest growth area" (page 61, Parks and Public Realm Plan.) Multiple maps and supporting data further demonstrate without question that our neighbourhood suffers significantly from its lack of nearby park space and appropriate community services.

Current development and pending applications in our area have essentially built out almost totally both Broadway Avenue and Roehampton Avenue as a series of tightly spaced towers in the 30 – 40 storey range, for the most part, almost doubling the heights of the existing buildings

that had defined the character of our apartment neighbourhood. These projects as well have and will continue to reduce significantly the amount of already limited green space between buildings. In short, intensification for this targeted Growth Centre has already dramatically changed the character of our neighbourhood, and diminished its livability. We are now confronted with the precedent of new building typologies with towers attached to existing towers and secondary backyard towers squeezed onto minimal sites. These intensification strategies are justified by the 'compensating' promise of beneficial through block connections with approvals. These connections however are only achievable if further egregious developments are approved to complete the public way.

The reality of the character of our area, considering the projects currently approved, will not match the description on page 2 of the Secondary Plan, specifically "New developments **will ensure** generously spaced towers and a variety of housing types." While the towers on our streets are unfortunately, for the most part, spoken for, Eglinton Avenue from Yonge Street to Redpath is still salvageable. Map 21-12 allows for heights on both sides of Eglinton Avenue that will create a third parallel wall to the 'walls' approved for Broadway and Roehampton Avenues, with allowable 40 to 60 storey buildings. The map does not address how many of these significantly oversized buildings can be squeezed onto or allowed on each site. It may well be possibly to repeat the approved and outrageous 55-65 Broadway doubled-up development on certain, if not all, sites.

This map, not shown, but much noticed, at the recent Midtown in Focus meeting essentially relegates our neighbourhood to a walled-in, enclosed enclave. The sun, the sky, airflow and views will be forever taken. The replacement strategy suggests that an enhanced lush public realm if even achievable, will suffice as a replacement to these essentials of a livable community. The reality is that the ground plane will be in shadow most of the day. The proposed public realm for our area, the questionably titled Park Street Loop depends on the approvals and construction of the proposed developments to incrementally finance and complete the public realm sequence of amenity spaces. Any 'missing teeth', i.e. non-developed existing sites, with challenging setback dimensions to the plan, and there are several, could well jeopardize the public realm's continuity (e.g. bicycle lanes and wider pedestrian sidewalks) even though paradoxically perhaps, non-overdeveloped, existing sites with improved streetscapes on their own terms is what is in fact needed to preserve the fresh air and sunlight. The renderings in the documents of the Park Street Loop (p. 81 Parks and Public Realm Plan) show wide, uninterrupted sidewalks, a lush tree canopy, and two or three cars lazily going down a very empty street. Obviously the artist had not studied our traffic or our streets. We believe that even a fully developed and enriched public realm, if achievable, cannot compensate for the density proposed for the remaining sites on our streets, or for the proposed new wall along Eglinton Avenue East. These densities are unsupportable and contrary to any notion of a livable community. The provision even of the Park Street Loop, as envisaged, is not sufficient as green space, or parkland provision, to justify the plan as proposed.

An entire separate position paper could be written which speaks equally forcefully to the current traffic congestion and personal safety issues along the streets in our neighbourhood. It is very fortunate to this point that no one has been killed or seriously injured given the narrow sidewalks and congestion on our streets crowded with pedestrians, service vehicles, bicycles

and cars. Broadway and Roehampton Avenues are +/- 30-foot wide streets with multiple schools and tall, dense building which cannot support the daily traffic, even today.

It is useful to compare building heights proposed for the Yonge-Eglinton area to those of the Davisville area. In our area, the heights of buildings are double the heights of existing buildings, which remain 'targets' for redevelopment or attached new buildings. The heights in the Davisville area of proposed new developments are in keeping with existing building heights and most of those existing apartment buildings are protected from infill capacity such as attached towers.

The City planners have provided us with a grim Hobson's choice: support this bad plan or you can expect worse. This is not a choice any resident should have to make. The subtext for this Plan in our area we believe is that creative, bold ways need to be found to provide the community services, and green infrastructure (never mind the streets and pipes) required to make a livable community. Different strategies need to be developed to distribute increased residential growth and the densities proposed need to be challenged. Instead we have been offered 'intensification on steroids' under the cover of a Growth Plan for complete communities.

Our position has unfortunately pitted us against the other associations in our community who reside outside our immediate 'threatened' neighbourhood. We are unhappy that this position unfortunately appears to be one of neighbour against neighbour. This is not our wish but a consequence of this Plan.

We respectfully ask that this Plan's approval be delayed and amendments be provided that re-examine the densities and heights proposed in the Plan as outlined on the Map 21-12. We also recommend that this entire Plan be examined by the Design Review Panel.

The Secondary Plan as it pertains to our area represents a profound lack of insight and imagination. Our Association is not against development. We have worked with developers in our area to improve development proposals. We would support well-considered appropriate development, which is not the case with this Plan. We are available to discuss our position further at a time convenient to the city planners and politicians.

The Republic Residents' Association