

Leaside Property Owners Association Incorporated

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November 5, 2019

North York Civic Centre
Main floor, 5100 Yonge St.
Toronto, ON M2N 5V7
Attention: Francine Adamo

**Re: NY10.2 Final Report - Laird in Focus - City Initiated Official Plan
Amendment**

Dear Councillor James Pasternak, Chair and Members, North York Community Council,

This is to provide our comments on the above noted Report, including proposed Official Plan Amendment (Site and Area Specific Policy – SASP 568) and Urban Design Guidelines to complete the Laird in Focus Planning Study. The LPOA has participated throughout the planning process including representation on the Local Advisory Committee, the provision of feedback at each stage of the Planning Study, and on the related planning applications within the scope of the Study, especially 815-845 Eglinton Avenue East (RioCan).

We note that resident comments at the September 17, 2019 Open House and subsequent correspondence continue to reflect community concerns regarding Laird in Focus generally in regard to:

Area A: Building Height and Massing, Design and "Fit" (architectural character);
Area B: Building Height and Massing, including setbacks to adjacent Neighbourhoods designated lands; and
Impacts on mobility, physical infrastructure, social services and schools (some of the latter are not part of the SASP).

We will comment on these concerns and indicate the extent to which we share these concerns taking into account the ongoing dialogue and our understanding of the provincial context ("the new normal").

Note that our comments must of necessity be considered as preliminary, and may be subject to modification due to the limited time to review since the posting of the SASP (October 29), and Urban Design Guidelines (October 31, 2019). However, we note that the current version of the SASP incorporates several of

our suggestions for changes submitted with respect to an earlier version (September 2019).

SASP

We note that Areas A and B are both shown as SASP 568 - why not different SASP numbers as they are physically separate and have very different roles in the community, visions and land use prescriptions? We have arranged our comments according to the two Areas.

Area A

Plan Layout

We are pleased that progress has been made to create, and begin to implement a cohesive vision for Study Area A. The scale and level of intensification in this location demands that this intersection develop a civic space that would work at both the community and city scales. The proposed OPA demonstrates a big improvement from the earlier layout (a series of similar blocks with little planning basis, other than open space links and roads), of how the parts might work together to form a cohesive and vibrant new community.

Indicative of this change of perspective are (1) the creation of a gateway and public plaza framed by the new transit pavilions for Laird Station, serving as a grand entrance to the new iconic Leaside Community Centre. At a City scale, these apparently minor but significant changes, switching the location of the piazza/community centre with the private building, would provide a dynamic visual break which would not only mark our Leaside Community but also celebrate transit along the Eglinton Corridor; and (2) placing the park to front onto Laird and Vanderhoof and adjacent to the community space, and (3) moving the office building to the south-east of the site.

Density and Building Heights

We have previously expressed concerns about the uniformly high densities proposed, and the large amounts and high proportion of residential uses compared with employment (industrial) uses. The LPOA conducted a survey in 2016 about 939 Eglinton Avenue East when that project was under review. Over 2000 Leasiders responded, and in response to the question – do you think that buildings over 11 storeys (ie tall buildings) are appropriate? 92% said “no”. We believe the Leaside community continues to have concerns. However, we acknowledge that the City Planning context has changed as a result of the revised Growth Plan, and changes to the Planning Act and the LPAT. As such we now support the City’s proposals re assigning specific density and heights, as

indicated on (SASP) Map 3, based on the Laird in Focus Planning Study recommendations.

The LPOA continues to hold the City to its earlier stated intent to limit intensification on the 3 other quadrants (other than Area A) at the Laird-Eglinton intersection.

Employment Lands

The SASP policies seem to address the Mixed Use designated lands but not the Employment Lands? For example what about policies supporting Live-Work in the area, and encouraging Incubator hubs?

Area B

9. Building Massing and Height

Page 12, section 9.8

Section 9.8 (v) in previous version has been omitted in the current version
"No part of any building should project into a 45 degree angular plane measured from a height of 10.5M taken 7.5M from the rear property line".

It is critical that there be performance standards in regard to angular planes on the west side of buildings on the west side of Laird due to the shadow, and overlook/privacy impacts on the Leaside residential neighbourhood (specifically Randolph Road).

Page 12, Section 9.8 (viii) (current version)

"Stand alone townhouses shall not be permitted".

Why not?

Access from Rear Lane

The staff report references (page 13) access from a rear lane but there is no proposed SASP policy that addresses this.

10. Pedestrian and Cycling Networks

10.8 Should be re-worded as follows:

"Intersections will provide high quality facilities and amenities including, but not limited to, the following:"

10.8 iii. Should be re-worded as follows:

At the crossings where high pedestrian volumes are anticipated wider crosswalks will be considered.

Page 21, Section 4(?). Map 3 Right-of-Way Widths associated with Major Streets

This appears to be placed out of context?

Urban Design Guidelines

Appendix A: History and Evolution of Laird in Focus Study Area

Page 41, 1967: "Leaside is annexed to the Township of East York"

Replace with 'The Town of Leaside amalgamates with the Township of East York to form the Borough of East York'.

Schools

The LPOA continues to be concerned about provision for schools needed as a result of the increased population. This is unaddressed in the staff report or the SASP.

We recognise that Laird in Focus represents a plan for the major development projects affecting Leaside's path forward, likely over the next 30 years. So we need to get it right, for local residents, for the City, and the province. Overall we are hopeful that the City is willing to take advantage of a unique and rare opportunity in city-building.

We gratefully acknowledge the contributions of Doug Obright and Carlos Moreno to this submission.

Yours very truly,

Geoff Kettel

Geoff Kettel

Co-President with Carol Burtin Frupp

c.c. Joe Nanos, Director, Community Planning, North York District

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